THE RAGGED EDGE OF FREEDOM

Race, Capitalism, and Class Struggle in Slavery's Borderland

MATTHEW E. STANLEY

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This book materialized from a specific convergence of interests and circumstances: historical, political, and of birthright. After generously reading a few chapters, my pal and Civil War historian counterpart David Schieffler observed, "If Chris Phillips and Mark Lause had a love child of historical scholarship, as it were, it might look something like this book." This was an immense tribute, at least in my eyes. It was also, in some sense, utterly expected. You see, in addition to serving as two of my mentors (come to be friends), Chris and Mark are, like myself, progeny of the Middle Border. That fact, evident in the pages that follow, has shaped both our collective and individual historical perspectives and sensibilities. In my home region of "Little Egypt," what fellow southern Illinoisan David Roediger calls the state's "two founding exclusions," the dispossesson and removal of Indigenous peoples and the restriction of Black settlement, always seemed hidden in plain sight. For me, excavating and relating the story of their afterlives has long been a scholarly imperative. Increasingly, narratives of resistance against those settler, slaver, and segregationist legacies—of aspirationally inclusive unions of working people pushing back against forces of concentrated wealth and power—has become a political imperative as well.

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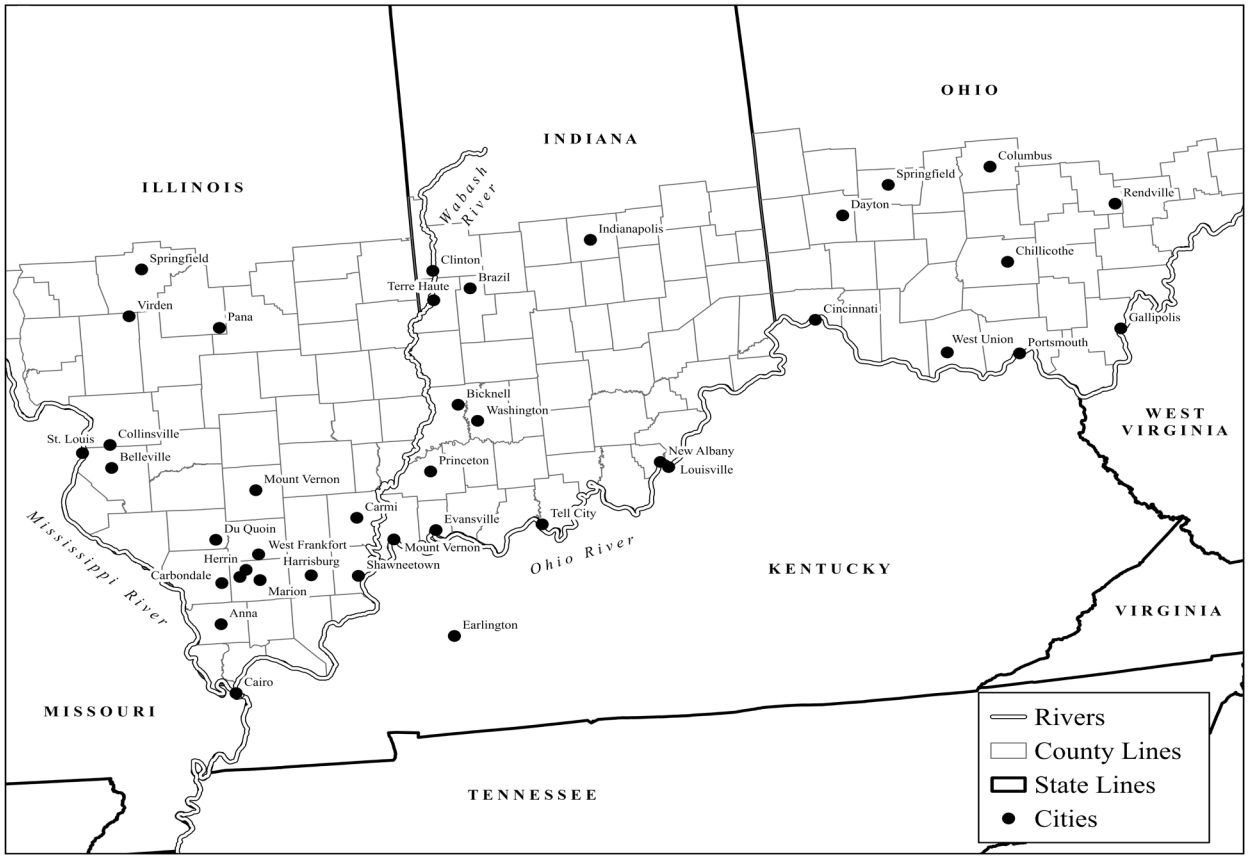
SLAVERY'S BORDERLAND



ANDREW FIALKA

INTRODUCTION

Border Thinking

In the summer of 1958, a Black man purporting to be an itinerant farm laborer drove the highways and backroads of southern Illinois looking for work. The jobless wayfarer first attempted to find a room for let at the extreme tip of the state, where the Mississippi and Ohio rivers converge. But the city of Cairo, farther south than Richmond, Virginia, and as close to Jackson, Mississippi, as to Chicago, offered no prospects. The motels—all of them white-owned—turned him away. Spirits low, the motoring farmhand contacted the region's lone civil rights attorney. The white lawyer, whose NAACP affiliation had once driven a mob to deface his home, arranged for the traveling laborer to stay with a Black family on the edge of the railyard. Procuring food quickly became a problem, however, as restaurants and counters refused the man service. "You know durn well we don't serve colored people," one owner scolded. "Just move on." The drifter received only a slightly warmer reception at the Public Aid Commission office, where a clerk explained to him that there was no work for a Black man. Under some circumstances he could go to Missouri and get a job chopping cotton, she explained, but it was surely too late in the season for that. Dejected, the migrant purchased a quart of milk from a drug store, guzzling it on the banks of the Ohio River. Hungry, hot, and humiliated, he looked across the sepia waters. Gazing on Jim Crow Kentucky, he weighed his options. He would go north.

But the traveler fared little better elsewhere in the basement of the Midwest. In Marion, some fifty miles north of Cairo, motel managers denied him quarter and directed him toward an African American boarding house. Again, restaurant owners shunned him. Though he noted the natural beauty of the rolling countryside and its well-kept farms, that allure rested on a social

structure vicious in its restriction. Clerks declined to serve him a soda. Roadside tavern keepers would not permit him entry to buy a pack of cigarettes. Gas station attendants waved him on. "It is the humiliation of segregation that is so bitter for a Negro," the man later reflected. "And in the North it cuts twice as deep . . . he never knows when he will be turned away. In the North a Negro never quite knows what his reception will be. In the South he does. That is a major difference."

The itinerant searched for answers from local whites. A lawyer in Marion explained racism in southern Illinois as a set of rituals perpetually resuscitated by editors, businessmen, ministers, and lawmakers. Battles between owners and workers, in which the former imported African American strikebreakers, also revived white-on-Black antagonism and refitted longstanding patterns of racial exclusion. "We have roots in the South," the attorney made clear, "and we've kept customs of the South. But, I might say too that we don't have trouble with our colored people. They don't go looking for trouble by pushing too hard. Segregation is no issue in Marion; we simply never discuss it." In other words, four years after *Brown v. the Board of Education*, it was not merely racial subordination, but racial separation, that most whites recognized as essential to social order. As they saw it, any challenge to this spatial dimension—*those people* "getting too close"—threatened the racial purity ideal that undergirded both the perceived and tangible advantages, however meager, of "white" skins.

Above all, proximity endangered jobs and property, and the out-of-work farmhand found that Black exclusion was common in industrial, as well as commercial and residential, sectors. In the nearby town of Colp, where residents were attempting to annex a portion of their school district to neighboring Carterville to avoid racial integration, managers at the town's major factory adhered to an unspoken policy of refusing to hire Black job-seekers. "They'll take your application and say they'll call you," one local disclosed, "but they never do." When the traveler attempted to apply for a starting position in a supermarket with a "Help Wanted" sign on the door, the clerk rebuffed him, stating bluntly, "It wouldn't do you any good to apply. It just wouldn't look right having a Negro working in the store of a town where Negroes don't live."

The demoralized pilgrim then turned west, initially determined to make for St. Louis and the relative security of its sizable African American communities. It wasn't until he reached East St. Louis, site of one of the largest "race riots" in U.S. history four decades earlier, that he was at long last allowed access to a white motel. But those experiences in Little Egypt, the southern-

most section of the so-called Land of Lincoln, left a bitter imprint. After only a few days in southern Illinois, he recalled, "I found myself running from the land of the Great Emancipator to St. Louis," from a former "free state" imbued with liberal mythos to one where slavery was once the law of the land.[1]

Although racial restriction in southern Illinois was quite real, the desperate traveler was, in fact, no farm laborer. He was Fletcher Martin, a Nieman Fellow at Harvard and reporter for the *Chicago-Sun Times*. As the African American Freedom Movement accelerated in the Deep South, Martin wrote an exposé on what he deemed the "unpredictable denials" experienced by Black people in downstate Illinois. Raised in Louisville and familiar with Upper South segregation, Martin found what he termed "the tradition of racial separatism" to be just as strong—if different in history and orientation—in the Lower Midwest. His encounters in Little Egypt formed the basis for the article "We Don't Want Your Kind!: Segregation in Illinois," published in the *Atlantic Monthly* that fall. Martin concluded that southern racism was not unique, as African Americans in the Lower Midwest faced non- or low-paying employment, discriminatory white owners, hostile white wage workers, and the daily struggle for subsistence.[2] "I found school segregation as rigid as you are likely to find in Mississippi; residential ghettos as dingy and dilapidated as in Birmingham or Atlanta," he explained. "And I found official and private attitudes as dismal and depressing as in the deepest South."[3]

THE RAGGED EDGE OF FREEDOM: Race, Capitalism, and Class Struggle in Slavery's Borderland is a story about the long shadow of slavery in a place where slavery barely existed. Telling that story requires an understanding of the origins, patterns, and dynamism of the "tradition of racial separatism" as it related to what historian Leon F. Litwack refers to as the region's "economics of repression." People form social identities through both closeness and juxtaposition, as well as out of self-preservation, or to meet their immediate economic needs. Accordingly, proximity to Native Americans, slave plantations, and freedpeople—ostensible rivals for land, resources, and jobs—prompted scores of nineteenth-century Lower Midwesterners to aggressively seize upon and assert white identity. And the region's relative poverty, a byproduct of capitalist exploitation and uneven development, but framed by commentators as pathology, led outsiders to question the humanity of border dwellers, which often enhanced their racial convictions.[4] As such, white people in southern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois amplified what historian George M. Fredrickson

describes as "the Northern image of the free Negro as a social danger" owing to the region's adjacency to the South's "near-periphery" economy and its "reserve army" of non-white labor, first of enslaved people, then of potential wage competitors.[5] In effect, by the time Fletcher Martin undertook his journey, slavery and its demographic and economic legacies had long made the Ohio River—in imagination if not reality—into a dividing line between labor markets, split by both wages and races. Dating to the mid-nineteenth century, the concept of *free white labor*—a political buzzword, species of racialized class formation, and a basis for social exclusion—was the time-honored response to this combined material and racial threat.

Martin's borderland was an "*interstitial* region" in which slave and wage labor systems had once overlapped, throwing one another into sharp relief. Its "inbetweenness" engendered violent systems of restriction and segregation enforced through both law and custom, as well as spasms of group racial violence (riots, banishments, lynching) exacted in response to periods of Black influx.[6] Situated between capitalist core and periphery, which is to say between "North" and "South," the borderland was susceptible to the stereotypes of both sections, and of neither. Outsiders came to view the Midwest's "southern counties" as anomalous to the region's enterprising nucleus, and "race relations" were often at the fore of such a critique.[7] This crucible of race-making involved elites using the Ohio River border as an instrument of social and labor control by contriving the threat of "negro invasion" to promote "scarcity consciousness" even as they pathologized and demonized poor whites.[8] In addition to constructing their own racial geographies, many "white" workers applied these elite-generated racial scripts to others, often in the name of protecting their livelihoods, and other times out of a cruel sadism seemingly divorced from material benefits. Race and class were, in other words, mutually reinforcing, co-constitutive, and inseparable from the molding of formal and informal boundaries. Overall, the political and cultural inheritances of free white labor and the history of living in a racial-labor borderland led to a hyper awareness of not only race per se, but of any mixing with racial "others" whose presence would supposedly undermine the advantages white people had accrued, even when those advantages were minimal or impermanent. Whether expressed out of defense of subsistence or sensibility, there was a deep-seated tie between white identity and borders, between race-making and capitalism.

Racial exclusion was firmly rooted in political economy, but human psychology was always present, and often paramount. Exploring racism as also

a system of internalized beliefs and identities, rather than merely a series of economically determined responses on the part of white workers, historian Alexander Saxton maintains that, according to economic theory, the transition from slavery to wage labor should have rendered racial characteristics consistently less relevant in the labor market over time. But it did not. Positing that "economic rationality" alone is therefore insufficient to explain the persistence, and in some cases the intensification, of anti-Black racism over the span of U.S. capitalist development, Saxton calls for a more "systematic explanation" of its "ideological components." This book attempts to respond to that challenge at the level of region, situating race "within social formations" and detailing from where white identity drew its "sustenance."[9] *The Ragged Edge of Freedom* concludes that just as there was sometimes no distinct line between victims and perpetrators—only considerations of power within them—there was also often no clear-cut division between "ideological" and "material" articulations of anti-Black racism. Saxton is correct in that "economic rationality" alone inadequately explains white working-class racism. But labor competition predominated, magnified by wage and union gaps along slavery's border. The aim of this book—which provides a longer durée, sharper geographic focus, and more materialist shank to an existing body of regional histories—is to account for the type of hatred, paranoia, and psycho-sexual anxiety that Saxton describes while foregrounding social relations, boundary making, and, above all, the economic underpinnings of racial and class formation. Racial aversion and "border fear" were, in essence, top-down policies and, secondarily, bottom-up reactions, with dire consequences for working people.

OBSERVERS HAVE LONG NOTED THE supposedly exceptional nature of anti-Black racism in the borderland. Traveling through the West in the 1830s, Alexis de Tocqueville commented that racial intolerance was most pronounced in "those states where slavery has never been known."[10] Generations of scholars concurred that racial separation and removal were honed in the area that abolitionist George Julian blasted as the "outlying provinces of the empire of slavery."[11] While all histories are unique because all are born out of specific material realities, *The Ragged Edge of Freedom* is less interested in sections, states, or micro-regions as sites of exceptionalism than in how that perception developed and, more specifically, what forces drove race-making and aversion, and their relation to social class. In other words, this analysis is

informed in part by critical whiteness studies, or the idea that the "white race" is a constructed and dynamic concept, and those who regard themselves as "white" do so out of racial motivations. To that end, racial formation involves establishing the parameters of who is accepted into whiteness and how being "white" affords social advantage, both measurable and intellective. Historically, white identity has also been intimately bound to the legal protection of private property.[12] Some scholars have criticized critical whiteness studies for applying psychoanalysis at the expense of historical process, and for presenting "white people" as "simple conveyors of racism or automatons dominated by racial ideology." However, the field's all-important emphasis on race as a social invention reveals that to be "white" is not a transhistorical or metaphysical phenomenon, but a mutable and heterogenous category, dependent on time and place, and always accompanied by—indeed, facilitating—class distinctions.[13]

But racial solidarity is only part of this story. White identity transformed continuously because it was perpetually under siege, and what Saxton terms the "white republic" was never an accomplished fact, even in regions that most conspicuously exhibited its political, social, and cultural characteristics. White borderlanders *understood* this, and professions of a "white man's government" were not only triumphant proclamations derived from the security of racial status, but also responses to emancipation, political reform, class conflict, and other threats from below. White supremacy was not monolithic, and countless members of the "ruling race" rejected its primacy. Not all uniformly or reliably privileged racial over class identities or saw the preservation of racial hierarchy as vital to the maintenance of their (albeit often precarious) material statuses. In addition to composing a class *in itself*, as a structural relationship to the means of production, many workers pursued a class *for itself*, with identities and conscious experiences as workers, and with various degrees of racial inclusivity.[14] Interracialism sometimes developed in unlikely places, with white workers rejecting social convention enough to ally with African Americans, and with Black workers resisting the anti-radical and anti-union pressures of Black middle-class conservatives to align with white trade unionists.[15] Even in the Lower Midwest, which was often striking in its racial and political homogeneity, Quakers, abolitionists, Radical Republicans, freedpeople, industrial unionists, Black laborers, agrarian populists, socialists, and Communists risked everything to defy the racial capitalist framework.[16]

Put simply, broad geographies of exclusion always contained (often suppressed and fleeting) geographies of solidarity. Interracialism at its most strik-

ing revealed what political theorist Alex Callinicos describes as "an inverse relationship between the level of class struggle and the intensity of racism," in which white racial prerogatives were abnegated or diminished, though not extinguished altogether, through mutual struggle over common goals.[17] Such instances affirm that, despite the influence of culture, habit, and tradition, racial identities and attitudes were not innate or schematic. They also suggest that any "solution" to the problem of racism must be primarily material and redistributive, rather than representational or metaphysical.[18] Without flattening or homogenizing cultural variation, and accounting for racial disparities, that illuminate rather than obscure the linkages between race and class inequality under capitalism, a politics of class can—and should prioritize efforts to—objectively reduce race prejudice through collective struggle based on shared interests among working people. Class politics alone cannot eliminate racism or related forms of group discrimination, but it can change the lived conditions—the sense of social differentiation and competition—that provide modern notions of race their raison d'être and continue to give them outsized social valence. In this sense, *The Ragged Edge of Freedom* illustrates the capacity of working-class self-activity to unseat seemingly "natural" racial hierarchies in part by exposing capitalism's "big lie"—scarcity, and its use as a mechanism of fear and discipline.

Yet these movements and moments and glimpses of liberation, which Theodore W. Allen calls "democratic departures" from the prevailing capitalist structure, were time and again frustrated by "*re*inventions of the 'white race.'"[19] The capacity to regenerate and redraw racial boundaries speaks to the interdependence of racism and capitalism, as well as the social power of those who both endure and construct racialization, often simultaneously. The essence of this scholarly debate concerns not whether capitalism is raced, but the degree to which the production of racial difference constitutes either an accessory or a feature. As historian Walter Johnson writes regarding St. Louis, "Racism and capitalism were not identical: one could not be reduced to the other. They were always in excess of one another—capitalism mobilizing and exploiting whites as well as Blacks, and white supremacy providing pleasure, even the filthy pleasures of racial disgust and collective violence, as well as profit."[20]

Although racial violence frequently exceeded questions of profit, devolving into gruesome spectacle, its material basis, either direct or oblique, often lurked below the surface. The relationship between capitalist labor regimes, borders, and white supremacy in fact offers a familiar story in a specific

regional setting: racism facilitating capitalist exploitation, and the exploited sometimes brutalizing others whom they deem a threat to their ever-precarious security. It is a story of "white" and aspirationally "white" workers both enduring oppression, then creating their own cultures of white supremacy, and either partaking in or directing spasms of racial violence. It is also a story of attempts at whiteness as hegemony, with dominant institutions—political parties, newspapers, and churches, as well as landholders, bankers, and industrialists—manufacturing racial division and sowing racial panic for power and profit. Perhaps most important, it is, in many ways, a people's history—one of complex resistance from below.

IN THE CRITICAL WHITENESS STUDIES tradition that began with Indigenous narratives, oral histories among enslaved people, and eventually intellectuals of color including W. E. B. Du Bois, James Baldwin, and Toni Morrison, this work addresses the impact that racism has on white people. In the borderland and elsewhere, the idea of a "white race" was integral to capitalist development, in part because racial division offered the ruling class a mechanism for mastery. Beginning with its inception in America's slaveholding colonies, what Allen calls "the invention of the white race" was a political process—not a genetic reality or a scientific manifestation—that created a "buffer social control stratum" in which poor "whites" stood between "not white" laborers, particularly enslaved Africans, and colonial elites, thus suffocating any semblance of labor solidarity in its cradle.[21]

Sweeping questions concerning whether racial "invention" and concomitant racism helped or hurt "white" workers risk neglecting contingency across time and place: the variety of the working class, the fluidity of which workers were and were not considered "white," the relation between short- and long-term gains, and the divergence between material and metaphysical assets. Although racial exclusion in the borderland was principally directed through state laws and community statutes, groups of white workers supported and cultivated cultures of restriction, typically in attempts to exert authority over labor markets. In virtually all cases, as today, "white" status offered myriad social and political privileges. The matter of economic advantage, however, though often equally obvious, was also more complicated and contradictory, as poverty persisted (and persists) across all racial groups, including those perceived to be beneficiaries of the racial system. To be sure, racial preference within exclusive crafts provided higher wages and job security to certain

white laborers, as well as their wider social orbit of families and communities, but these subjects constituted a fraction of the white working class. All things considered, the marginalization of workers of other races, genders, and "skill" levels tragically circumscribed the potential size of organized labor and, accordingly, the net power of working people.[22]

What Allen terms "white skin privilege" was therefore an unsettling tradeoff, as it offered an upper hand while being anchored in the concealment of exploitative class relations. As Du Bois put it, countless white workers "would rather have a low wage upon which they could eke out an existence than see colored labor with a decent wage."[23] In this sense, *The Ragged Edge of Freedom* explores how, within a regional context, workers can be both hyperexploited and agents of oppression; or how certain segments of white workers are, often simultaneously, the victims of classed and regionalized oppression as well as purveyors of white supremacy. As historian David Roediger contends, it is crucial that historians see the racial identities of such workers "in the broad context of class formation rather than in the narrow confines of job competition."[24] Foisted from above or refined on the ground, "white" self-conception was more than an element of particular workplace settings or labor actions; it was a feature of how working people came to understand and organize themselves in class terms, one in this case shaped deeply by political borders and adjacency to the South.

Questions of how people's attachment to racial identity reproduces their own subjugation center on what historian David Montgomery calls "the decisive importance of the ideology and practice of racism in the experience of laborers."[25] This concept involves both resources and ideas—the class system itself as a form of violence, as well as race as an impediment to thinking in class terms and the active pursuit of class interests. While "false consciousness" is an easily abused concept, capitalist ideology underscored competition between groups, dividing and distracting working people through assurances of upward mobility. Whether or not such "falsehoods" prevented white workers from privileging their direct material interests is a thornier question, as so many "culture wars" were (and are) not "false," but instead rooted deeply in questions of belonging—who should and should not have social rights. There was, in other words, seldom a clean line between materiality and culture, between class interests and what some today term "identity politics."

At the same time, we should not "let capital off the hook" by overemphasizing white workers as vehicles of white supremacy and labor unions as sites of racial exclusion. Racial identity and production were class specific, scaled

to influence. Studies that ignore this fact risk downplaying the paramount role of the state and the far greater agency of the ruling class and their institutions. Despite the rise of working-class influence through mass parties and labor unions, even populist racism was broadcast through politicians and media, if not enacted by government agencies, courts, laws, and authorities.[26] Working people were not simply inspired by the anti-Black ideas of social elites; they tended to dictate anti-Black practices with the explicit or tacit approval and cooperation of those elites.[27]

Moreover, the failure of employees to identify principally *as workers* was not the sole (or even primary) reason that they did not rise up across racial and gender lines with greater frequency and success. Undoubtedly, and to a far greater degree than owners, workers were atomized not only by race and gender, but also by trade, skill, ethnicity, language, religion, political party, national origin, and geography and section. However, like today, the other great source of working-class compliance was that workers were forced to organize politically at far greater relative personal costs. Even as a collective, they too rarely possessed power—the capacity to marshal resources and influence various instruments of the state—on par with individual owners. Consent, the acknowledged subordination of worker to owner, was the default position owing to ideology and, perhaps more, to the basic material constraints of the class system.[28]

The benefits of whiteness, moreover, were not equal or universal. For most whites, the "petty privileges" of political and social advantage did not translate to class mobility by transforming propertyless wage earners into independent proprietors.[29] Indeed, for the region's workers who remained unorganized on levees, shop floors, and tenant farms, the advantages of "being white" existed conjointly, and perhaps even primarily, in the mind. Being a "free white laborer" was more than the license to evade race-specific violence and injustice; it was a hegemonic tool that provided white workers with certain social and psychological advantages over non-whites *even as* those advantages were, on the whole, subordinated to the material costs of being "white" rather than a "worker."[30] Like Du Bois's "psychological wage," that process entailed both tangible benefits and the *feeling* of entitlement that convinced some non-elites that, by being designated as "white," they necessarily had more in common with the rich than with their fellow (non-white) workers.[31] In this analysis, contra to liberal understandings of "white privilege" devoid of material analysis, thinking of one's self and interests as belonging also or primarily to a superior race, rather than an exploited class,

has been historically devastating not only for non-whites, especially Black and Native people, but for white workers as well.[32] Put another way, despite the accumulation of discrete benefits among white workers over time (wage savings, and even property ownership and intergenerational wealth), capitalist development in the borderland suggests that the short-term perks of being "white" did not often outweigh its long-term costs, and a regional orientation brings this reality into clearer focus.

Yet critical whiteness studies has a regional problem.[33] While scholars have explored the attitudes, behaviors, and language of people who understand their interests as "white," such research often ignores analyses of place, and critics have subsequently called for greater emphasis on spatial dynamics.[34] This is especially true as it relates to racecraft in certain industries. In his work on Black coal miners, historian Ronald L. Lewis recognizes the importance of "unique regional histories" and "distinctive regional patterns" in shaping the racial experience.[35] Still, geographies of white identity, or how racial formation operates over time in discrete localities, are few, and to the extent that whiteness studies have broached regional specificities, Appalachia dominates the discourse, most recently through academic responses to JD Vance's *Hillbilly Elegy*.[36] There is an obvious need for scholars to analyze the frameworks commonly applied to mountain people—the relationship between persistent poverty, extractive capitalism, labor migration, and race-making, as well as working-class resistance, including collective struggle at the point of production—within the context of other regions.

The Ragged Edge of Freedom illuminates the peculiarities of racial formation in one borderland, a nominally free region where proximity to slavery gave added force to "being white." In doing so, this book challenges not merely contemporary liberal assumptions regarding "white rural rage," which mistakenly identify "rural white voters" as the spear tip of fascism by homogenizing their diversity and exaggerating their position within Donald Trump's electoral coalition, but also the fundamental mythologies of the Midwest.[37] These myths include the region's image as a "real America" of pastoral family farms, roughly egalitarian small towns, and "ordinary" people—tropes that devalue the Midwest's true racial, economic, and cultural diversity and conceal its historic relationship to settler violence, white supremacy, corporate capitalism, and profound inequality.[38] As early as the mid-nineteenth century, the idea of the borderland—or what was then called "the border," "the Northwest," or simply "the West"—as a national "middle" was an ideological concept, suggesting a place "in between" the perceived extremes of chattel slavery

(the Deep South) and moral antislavery (the Upper North).[39] While sectionalism and civil war undermined this notion of a national "center"—one that was "average" only in the sense that, like the nation, it was a place of conjoined identities, complicated histories, and many-sided contests over resources and power—Gilded Age and Progressive era narrative creators constructed a new ideological terrain in response to industrialization, urbanization, and cosmopolitanism. The birth of the "Midwest" paralleled the invention of other agrarian "heartlands" across the globe, soon becoming, along with New England, the South, and the West, one of the nation's primary "imaginative geographies."[40] And the lore around what would become "Middle America," one of bucolic farms, picket-fence homes, and virtuous small towns, was coded as both small-scale propertied and white, acting as a bulwark against political radicalism.[41]

Of course, this "center of the nation" imaginary masked a reality of multiracialism, urbanism, and inequality, as well as the deprecation of "non-virtuous whites."[42] Which of these "Middle Americans" did and did not count as white—non, fully, or conditionally—was also very much a class question. While scholars debate if and the degree to which "othering" vocabularies such as "white trash," "hillbilly," or "redneck" constitute forms of racialization, this book is more concerned with how they disempowered workers in a particular regional setting.[43] The "white" qualifier within "white trash" reveals that white people, too, are racial subjects, but the "trash" component connotes that whiteness is in fact highly stratified.[44] And because race is provisional and ideological in a way that class is not, it is difficult—sometimes impossible—to separate racial from class indicators, or to delineate between partisan and the regional epithets in the context of raced and classed political battles. The borderland nevertheless produced its own shifting race-class labels, as elites adapted notions of debased whiteness to specific political contexts. With a constant eye toward power relations—how white identity benefits elites even when not of their direct creation—this study maintains that classist tropes such as "white trash" and regionalized class labels including "Sucker" and "Butternut," or even "Hoosier" and "Egyptian," accelerated the reproduction of white identity, thus supplying a provincial gloss to the creation and exploitation of social difference where slavery and "freedom" overlapped.

"FREE WHITE LABOR" DEFINED A region in which boundaries shaped the class and racial system as maps, grids, and physical divides became instru-

ments of possession, enclosure, and exclusion. These borderscapes, originated in colonial dominium, proved more than legally established partitions between peoples, property demarcations that divide land and resources, or cartographical representations.[45] They were also—as all borders are—sites of identity formation and projection, with accompanying hierarchies that determined who constituted a *legitimate* worker, citizen, or human life. In this sense, the borderland in question is a microcosm of the political nation, whose immigration laws have always centered on racial exclusion. Although the United States placed no restriction on state entry until 1875, the link between race and citizenship dates to the naturalization law of 1790, which acknowledged only "free white persons." As political geographer Reece Jones argues, the historic relationship between race and borders, and the state's use of immigration laws as proxies for racial restriction, means that "the mainstream consensus that the United States needs immigration laws is, at its core, a white supremacist position."[46]

More recently, border "crises" have highlighted the tension between this spatially constrained nationhood and the borderlessness of capital. In some sense, Donald Trump's call to "Build the Wall" has dealt a final blow to the United States' cherished frontier myth, or the promise that continuous expansion, of markets if not physical territory, is a national entitlement—one that also deflects competing interests and tempers social conflict at home. As historian Greg Grandin observes, Trump's focus on a border wall in a country so historically wedded to the fiction of limitlessness has become "a way to acknowledge capitalism's limits, its pain, without having to challenge capitalism's terms."[47]

Similar "acknowledgments" are occurring elsewhere, as both the militarization of the U.S.-Mexico perimeter, long supported by both political parties, and the "migrant crisis" in Europe, with its lethal "fortress" border regime, have become taproots for an advancing—and border-obsessed—Right. This new xenophobia has, on its face, exposed the logical inconsistency that reactionary elites slander immigrants and trumpet "secure borders" while transacting business across those borders and relying on the market expansion, profits, and labor surplus that immigration provides. The jig is not yet up, however. The electoral victories of Fidesz, Vox, Fratelli d'Italia, Chega, and Rassemblement National, as well as Trump, who parlayed Birtherism, proposals to end birthright citizenship, and a multibillion-dollar deportation machine into three successive Republican Party nominations, have invigorated "blood and soil" white nationalism and "Great Replacement" conspir-

acy across continents. Predictably, liberalism has been unable to solve the dilemma, in large part because doing so would require acknowledging how non-elites with no basis in applied class politics transmogrify the symptoms of capitalism—scarcity, competition, and uncertainty—into national chauvinism and racial grievance. So, while the contexts have changed, and as we lurch from a political "crisis" over immigration to one over social resources and what persons the state should "legalize" and serve, residents of the nineteenth-century borderland would well recognize the nativism of today's international Right, with its allusions to "race suicide" and "white genocide," and chants of "You! Will Not! Replace Us!"

In sum, the power to construct, alter, and crisscross—to, in effect, "use" borders—remains a class question, determined by power. To be sure, the borderland's river boundaries served many functions: markers of territorialization and political sovereignty, sources of migration and travel and information, and sites of commodity exchange and arbitrage.[48] The very notion of rivers as political delimitations speaks to an inherent asymmetry, or of borders as apparatuses of order, authority, and regulation, endowed through capital and the state with the capacity to dominate, exploit, and expel. In the case of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, they were an express means to contain labor power by being "open to the flows of goods and capital but more closed to the circulation of human bodies."[49] The resultant economic precarity and inequality—and the extent to which they reinforce and reconstitute each other—enabled elites to continuously leverage border spaces, tapping into racial anxieties and restrictionist impulses that often became grounded in working-class custom and culture, in routine and repetition.[50] So, while the rivers bridged white families and white capital, and were perceived by many white workers as a bulwark against economic competition, for Blacks they were policed borders, defended initially by slave catchers and state exclusion laws, and then, after slavery, by organized vigilantes, local sundown ordinances, and violent mobs. As part of a frontier zone between capitalist core and periphery, between wage labor and slavery, and between different forms of capitalism—liberal and illiberal, industrial and agricultural—the nineteenth-century borderland proved an ideal habitat for the manufacture of fear.

Attempts to unmask that fear by challenging the free white labor consensus—whether through Black migration or racially inclusive labor unions—engendered resistance, including violence. One might construe some such violence as extra-material, as lynching and expulsion often served mostly to defend the sanctity and parameters of white community against *those people*.[51]

Yet in the borderland, conceptions of *those people* were shaped by proximity to slavery, and included Black slaves and "cheap labor," as well as poverty, with poor border whites demeaned by more advanced capitalist societies in the North. As such, *The Ragged Edge of Freedom* is, in part, a case study in how dominant racial groups in a near-peripheral economy stigmatized their "competitors," especially non-white people, while also being "othered" by the emerging metropole (the *real* Midwest).[52] This involved people who fiercely identified as "white" both assigning and being assigned physiognomies and biological traits and becoming, in some cases, the "negroes" of "respectable" white society even as they militantly rejected any semblance of racial leveling, including to the point of mass bloodshed. Such processes were inseparable from capitalist ideology—everything from the constant unease over scarcity and the incessant individualization of poverty—which conditions its oppressed to oppress others in turn.

While the collective articulation of racial difference around borders may have appeared to be, at times, disconnected from direct economic considerations, it was nevertheless rooted in the social relations of production. This was particularly true where free labor met slavery, and, later, where unionized bisected non-unionized labor. The Ohio and Mississippi rivers were indeed "white borders," as Reece Jones terms them, but they were also "capital's borders," and their function as raced boundaries derived not merely on cultural preference, white over Black, but from political economy. Marxist theorists highlight the relationship between capitalism and territorial bordering as part of a long process of enclosure, privatization, and resource control. Most assert that fixed political borders are, at essence, bourgeois creations that create and perpetuate dependency and inequality by determining and often restricting access to land, food, and jobs. Although workers, who often look to shape labor markets by limiting migrants, exerted some degree of influence, borders are fundamentally top-down inventions, porous and "open" to those with sufficient capital. To elites, they are things to be constructed, transcended, and modified if necessary; to workers, whose relationship to borders imbues them with either "deserving" or "undeserving" migratory worker status (citizens vs. foreigners), they are expressions of state violence—or a bastion against border-penetrating *schmutzkonkurrenz*, or "dirty competition."[53]

The drive for profit did not only affect classes, races, and boundaries; it yielded continuously manipulable *racialized borders*. While elites distorted those borders according to their interests, working-class movements that failed to adequately address and overcome popular border fears—those that

responded to split labor markets through geographic (and racial) insularity rather than incorporation across borders (and races)—tended to stall and undercut their own development. In this sense, borders were sites of encounter, contestation, and negotiation, and worker-crossers were, in many ways, their own agents—rather than passive victims or mere "tools" of capital—even though the ultimate capacity to formally recalibrate borders resided with the powerful. Indeed, some owners encouraged worker movement across borders to reduce labor costs; others opposed it—especially Black migration—because they believed in the superior productivity of white workers or wished to maintain stable social relations with their neighbors and employees by retaining an all-white society. The mass dissemination of "invasion" panic through media, religion, and politics—the popularization of the idea that emancipation or Black migration would lead to either resource shortage or "amalgamation"—demonstrates the role of borders as instruments of partisan politics and hegemony, even when internalized and espoused by nonelites. Boundaries were not mere political demarcations or racial inventions; they were also mechanisms of perceived worker protection, class segmentation, and labor control.[54] The result was a variant of what semiotician Walter Mignolo terms "border thinking," or, in this case, a relentless boundary consciousness in a region where whiteness and "free labor" were, in many ways, more conspicuous because they were less secure.[55]

PART ONE, "FORTRESS FREE LABOR," explores the legal establishment and cultural dissemination of "free white labor" during the antebellum period. More than a political consensus, what historian Herbert Gutman identifies (but does not interrogate) as "free white labor" was a species of racialized class formation in which "white" and "free labor" proved inseparable and irreducible.[56] This worldview involved the rejection of both slavery *and* Black people, centering economic self-ownership as an entitlement of people designated as "white."[57] Sprung from the experiences of settler-colonialism and slavery, and contrasting white producers against those of licentious Indians and unfree Africans, free white labor proved especially resonant along a political border that also separated distinct—yet complementary and sometimes overlying—labor regimes, with Black bondsmen on one side of the Ohio River and their supposed antithesis on the other. As Anglo-American settlers dispossessed and privatized the so-called wilderness of common Indigenous lands, shored up by territorial and state laws concerning political borders, closeness

between free and slave states bred a "western" culture predicated on sectional accommodation. The impulse to preserve free white labor grew fully compatible with, and in some ways dependent on, the slave system. Safeguarding white republicanism in the Lower Midwest meant protecting chattel bondage within—if not restricting slavery to—the Border South, and racial aversion on one side of the border necessitated racial domination on the other.[58]

Prominent advocates of the free white labor ideal, whether Democrats Orlando B. Ficklin and John A. Logan or Republicans Orville H. Browning and Thomas Corwin, understood that a society devoid of Black workers, free or slave, required two things: the fabrication and strict regulation of political borders, and tight control of Black people beyond those borders, through either racial colonization or, more feasibly, the maintenance of the slave system. Free white labor became official, top-down policy through Black Laws, including Ohio's 1803 codes, and state exclusion charters, such as those in Illinois (1848) and Indiana (1851). It was likewise part and parcel of the development of rivers as racialized labor borders, in which workers viewed themselves as separate from potentially undercutting competitors who *also* belonged to a different and inferior race. This combination of material and racial hysteria proved politically useful, as politicians and the partisan press stoked panic concerning migrant "hordes" on the fringes. Workers learned to aggressively assert their racial difference from Black people through white supremacy, even if, for most, the advantage of skin manifested more through consciousness than earnings. Free white labor ideology was, in other words, both a classed and raced concept that linked material scarcity to racial identity, and proximity to slavery's border continuously reanimated negrophobia as it related to competition anxieties over work and wages.

By the 1850s, a full-fledged and bipartisan free white labor ideology had emerged, predicated on border control and population exclusion. Although defied by free Blacks, Quakers, and abolitionists, a racial prohibitive consensus took hold in the region. Democrats, the majority party, believed that free white labor depended on the continued protection of Black slavery. Portraying the fledgling Republican Party as a Trojan horse for abolitionism and socialism, they vowed that antislavery politics, and any semblance of equal social rights, would embolden free Blacks and prompt southern slaves to abscond north, thus chipping away at slavery's long-term viability, beginning with the Border South, and slowly "amalgamating" the borderland. The Ohio River, they warned, would become a "front line" of "negro invasion."

Republicans countered by seizing the mantles of both whiteness and labor,

articulating an ethos of economic development and small-scale capitalism that catered to the needs and fears of their constituents. Counterposing as the true "white man's party," leaders of the upstart party argued that slavery's restriction and the preservation of free labor mobility in the western territories was the best way to safeguard the lives and livelihoods of common white people, especially those living precariously along slavery's border. Put another way, the Republican free labor ideal represented, in part, an almost nostalgic response to encroaching industrial capitalism through a chimerical escape from the rising wage economy. And just as Europeans dealt with lost "preindustrial pleasures" by defining enslaved Africans as lazy and promiscuous, urban Republicans projected their anxieties over encroaching time and work discipline onto "poor whites" in less commercially developed parts of the North who had supposedly been corrupted by contact with the slave system.[59]

In doing so, regional elites questioned and reshaped what it meant to be "white." Because the categorization of border people into races was entwined with their organization into classes, the press characterized "white people" who lacked the articles that bind whiteness to power (property, education, secure employment) as "trash." In fact, elites applied the traits of laziness, wastefulness, intemperance, tribalism, propertylessness, defiance of legal boundaries, and an inability to transcend one's "natural state" to various social "others," whether "Irish Paddies" or "Negro beasts," or regional types including "Suckers," "Hoosiers," and "Egyptians." These attributes were also, not incidentally, the primary markers of non-capitalism, antithetical to the most valued criteria of industriousness, frugality, sobriety, individualism, property ownership, adherence to legal boundaries, and the capacity to "triumph over nature." In other words, partisan appeals to "honest" free white labor reinforced stereotypes concerning the "dishonest" poor and stigmatized non-capitalists—from Indians to slave rebels to white squatters—who resisted the legal and coercive premises of the new economic order.

Ultimately, the residue of Jacksonian producerism, rather than a developed class politics, legitimated "free white labor" while also rendering it obfuscatory, representing all things to all (white) people. The "white" modifier proved more salient, in fact, because ambiguous identities of "labor" did not correspond to ownership. While most anyone could embrace the mantle of "labor," fewer could lay claim to legal whiteness. Accordingly, the free white labor spirit appealed not only—or even primarily—to mechanics, farmhands, wage earners, and the artisanal working class but also to "productive" capitalists including shopkeepers, farm owners, and petty-bourgeois professionals.

This catholic ethos was, of course, part of a broad emerging vision of small proprietorship through upward mobility, antagonistic to the so-called Slave Power and rooted in the Lincolnian "right to rise," which promised an entrepreneurial independence that was intrinsically non-universalizable. In that sense, "white," though fluid, was more precise than "labor," thereby underscoring race, more than class, gender, or national origin, as the fulcrum of social exclusion. Free white labor became, as historian Mike Davis contends, a class-conflating "political illusion" that blunted incipient worker consciousness.[60] And the unbroken backbeat of border-tinted scarcity panic would render it catastrophically tenacious.

Part Two, "Dumping Ground," surveys how civil war and emancipation altered the free white labor consensus. Tracing the wartime attitudes of farmers, workers, soldiers, editors, and politicians, this section argues that anti-emancipation backlash along slavery's border, though augmented, and in countless cases defined by psycho-social fears, was predicated on economic grievance. It was not simply that wage precarity and negrophobia enflamed each other; it was that they were, in most cases, fully inseparable. This is not to say that class oppression was greater than racial oppression, or that capitalism and white supremacy were identical, but that capitalism, established alongside property-based racial hierarchies and legitimized by discourses that stressed "competition" and "replacement," gave constant and changing signification and force to white identity.[61]

The result was what Fredrickson describes as a "sense of black peril," exacerbated by wartime conditions.[62] From the outbreak of hostilities, antiwar critics exploited lagging earnings, slowed river trade, and economic depression to generate opposition to liberal racial measures. Staggering concentrations of wealth, particularly through speculation and government-aided military contracts, and a discriminatory conscription program that enabled the wealthy to buy their way out of service also kindled anti-emancipation fires. Although economic transformation in the North in some ways mirrored the "general strike" in the South, as labor demand empowered mechanics and workingmen, who proved among the region's most committed Unionists, racialized producerist arguments nevertheless exploited a general sense of privation. Made most forcefully by so-called Peace Democrats, such assumptions held that borderlanders were vying for a finite number of jobs and resources against non-white adversaries.

In many instances, elites employed what historians Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker detail as Francis Bacon's "theory of monstrousness" as

an instrument to incite panic and discipline workers within specific labor arrangements.[63] Expressed through what historian Eugene Berwanger terms the "dumping ground idea," such occasions saw white borderlanders adopt the rhetoric of racial and economic replacement through concepts like "free negroism," "negro dependency," "nigger equalization," and "Africanization," as well as supernatural references to "ghosts," "phantoms," and "apparitions."[64] In other cases, only *natural* disaster—the climatic phenomena of "flood," "wave," "tide," "surge," "tornado," and "tempest"—could effectively relate emancipation's anticipated impact. Monstrosity in this setting also included dehumanizing and exterminationist concepts, including "swarm," "pestilence," "contagion," and "plague," long applied to Indigenous people, that converged with environmental and biological threats related to the river ecology.

While the vast majority of borderlanders remained committed to free white labor, unflinching support for the Union cause, combined with persistent skepticism toward emancipation, spawned a region of "qualified revolutionaries." This process saw legions of white workers cite notions of tradition and restoration to justify their active agency in slavery's destruction within a conflict of increasingly radical proportions. Many "turned black" by embracing emancipation, Black enlistment, and various forms of racial leveling. Although initially committed to preserving the Union strictly "as it was," the bulk of Lower Midwesterners came gradually to tolerate or embrace emancipation as a *war measure*, though not necessarily as a *war aim*. In sum, defeating the Confederacy necessitated a racial partnership—though never racial equality—between southern slaves and free white Midwestern farmers and wage earners, one devoid of the institutional permanence or ideological coherence that class, rather than nationalist, struggle might have provided. Confederate defeat and the end of slavery would shatter that temporary alliance and reconfigure the Republican Party.

At the same time, longstanding Republican hostility toward the heavily Democratic borderland morphed into an incendiary brand of loyalty politics. The Republican press, including the *New York Tribune* and the *Chicago Tribune*, sent correspondents into southern Illinois and Indiana who portrayed the region as a seedbed of disloyalty populated by "mean whites." Descriptors including "Butternut," "Sucker," and "Dimmicrat" became synonymous with pro-Confederate, anti-Black, or anti-Reconstruction sentiment, as well as "degraded" white people on the border. Nevertheless, this association of the Democratic Party with "Copperheadism"—and of the Republicans with regional military leaders including Ulysses S. Grant, William T. Sherman, and

John A. Logan, whose shift from proslavery Democrat to Radical Republican helped instigate a political turn in southern Illinois—facilitated electoral transformation toward the party of Lincoln.

Overall, loyal borderlanders became essential catalysts of emancipation even as the social consequences of Black freedom drove white people across class lines to sharpen their racial identities and boundaries of community. Black migration and the overturning of state racial exclusion laws, for instance, led white Lower Midwesterners to place added emphasis on internal borders (counties, towns, neighborhoods), and to resort to other forms of anti-Black violence: riots, expulsions, racially restrictive edicts, and new forms of policing and border patrol. The threat of Black "invasion" also drove a counterrevolutionary peace movement that exploited the specter of "negro competition" and painted the struggle to preserve the Union as a "rich man's war, poor *white* man's fight." Rather than dissipate following their electoral defeat in 1864, Peace Democrat ideas and discourses melded into mainstream party politics and future populist and racial nationalist movements.

This embryonic class consciousness, garbled and racially qualified though it often was, also produced glints of an alternative politics. Social unrest in the face of industrialization, including uncertainty and contestation over the old "free labor" deception, induced working-class restlessness that contained the capacity for bloodshed, but also the capacity to solidarize in defiance the free white labor consensus. Possibilities for broad, class-based unity were limited, however, by the inability of loosely coordinated agrarians and industrial toilers to unify with freedpeople through support for Radical Reconstruction as a workers' movement. Above all, these "what could have beens" were checked by the "regrouping" of the region's and the nation's ruling classes, including through a conservative culture of sectional reconciliation that was both anti-worker and anti-Black.[65]

Part Three, "The Ghost of Negro Competition," examines how profound social changes in the post–Civil War decades—industrialization, proletarianization, party politics, labor organization, and owner backlash—both reinforced and challenged conceptions of free white labor. The wartime recoil against Black migration, fertilized periodically by electoral cycles and economic shocks, endured. The role of borders remained paramount. And the fear among white people on the periphery of being caught between two exploitative labor systems, the plantation and the factory, persisted long after chattel slavery was destroyed. Democratic elites co-opted and built on the notion of "white men besieged" in order to resist racial integration and civic

equality; their Republican counterparts vilified other manifestations of "dishonest labor" through hard racism against European and Chinese workers. Republicans did not seek *racial* replacement, as Democrats alleged, but many owners did seek *worker* replacement, equating freedpeople and immigrants with lower labor costs. Meanwhile, through the proliferation of the term "white slave," an assortment of white people with disparate goals and interests, from reactionary politicians to women's rights reformers, re-racialized bondage as a white experience. Concepts such as "unwanted," "oversupply," and, most commonly, "cheap" labor became euphemisms for not merely convict, child, non-union, and other forms of "illegitimate" work, but also for non-white workers.

As either cultural receivers or producers, white toilers proved integral to racial imagining and reification. With "free" no longer synonymous with "white" labor, countless wage earners saw formerly enslaved people as threats to their purses, as well as to white women, property, and community. Soaring inequality, exploitation, and the concomitant loss of worker autonomy invigorated notions of racial phantasm. Class organization and labor republicanism frequently converged with, rather than jeopardized, white racial solidarity. As evidenced by southern Illinois labor activist and racial exclusionist Andrew J. Kuykendall, white identity and preference remained features of early trade unionism and radical agrarianism. Historians including Joe William Trotter Jr. and Darrell Bigham have examined what Alonzo Ward terms this "war against the Black worker" in the late nineteenth-century industrial borderland, in which white working-class organization amount to "a new form of racial exclusivity" that simultaneously degraded Black and elevated white labor.[66]

But whereas white skin privilege had the capacity to promote white laborers within the working class, "petty privileges" did not typically elevate them beyond it. They did not eliminate and in many cases did not even mitigate their basic exploited and dependent condition. In other words, while often affording social protections or producing interim gains for some white wage earners, new manifestations of Black aversion in the borderland had the net effect of dividing workers, weakening labor movements, undermining progressive electoral coalitions, and undercutting public provisions. Where anti-Black racism won, all workers lost.

However, social transformation in the borderland did not catalyze an inescapable tide of reaction. Far from it. Although resisted and beaten back by owners, the era saw striking examples of practical racial coexistence as indus-

trial unionists, socialists, and populists received Black farmers and workers, rarely on equal terms, but in greater real and proportional numbers than their counterpart organizations of professional-class whites. There ran a crooked path from wartime miners' unions, National Labor Union associationists, and the militant strikers of 1877 to the Knights of Labor, which became the first region-wide institutionalized force for working-class multiracialism. Indeed, labor organizations proved sites of both exclusion, reflecting and reinforcing broader cultures of racial restriction, and integration, often far outpacing the rest of society.

Part Three emphasizes these "almosts" and "near misses" in the postwar borderland, as a succession of short-lived but pioneering labor groups represented, to varying degrees, countervailing powers against capitalist domination and, at times, racial division. Like the interracial political potential among New South dissenters as described by historians C. Vann Woodward, Carl Degler, and Edward L. Ayers, the "New Borderland"—after the repeal of state exclusion laws, with the region legally opened to Black migration—saw moments of Black-white possibility that defied consensus practices of increasingly localized racial restriction, segregation, and bloodshed.[67] Although they imparted an egalitarian residue that would herald future reform movements, such prospects were thwarted by cross-class racism and the far superior resources of state-backed and increasingly organized elites. A testament to "how racial hierarchy structures economic exploitation," the early linking of Black scare and red scare also slowly became part of what historian Charisse Burden-Stelly calls the "co-constitution of anti-Black and antiradical policy," criminalizing those who yearned for an alternative politics as dangerous and illicit violators of an emerging "True Americanism."[68]

The backslide of postwar interracial possibility precipitated new forms of violence across the borderland, justified as infractions against free white labor—and beyond it. Part Four, "The Buffer Problem," argues that such violence—underpinned by inequality, split markets and uneven development—centered more on racial aversion than racial domination, and both reinforced and recomposed patterns of restriction. Unlike the Deep South, where lynching tended to function as a device for the social control over African American populations in the context of interracial cohabitation, group racial violence in the Lower Midwest was founded on longstanding exclusionary impulses that were intended to either discourage or drive off Black populations altogether. The shift from state-sponsored to de facto exclusion prompted outbreaks of vigilantism and community-driven expulsions, lynch-

ings, race riots, and forms of collective intimidation, as the border imaginary continued to animate anti-Black violence. This was true in Cincinnati, Evansville, and East St. Louis, which featured large and entrenched Black communities, but it was especially the case in counties and small towns where Black people had formerly been marginal or, in many cases, systematically barred. In cities where Black populations were not easily dislodged for practical or political reasons, rigid systems of racial segregation took hold. In others, local and de facto replaced state and de jure exclusions as the white body politic came to envisage Black America through what Roediger terms "whitelore," which combined mass culture, popular stereotypes, and secondhand stories of racial encounters, often feeding atrocity-producing situations.[69]

Aside from the desire to restrict, remove, and banish, anti-Black group violence in the borderland defied discernible patterns. Evolving stereotypes regarding laziness, criminality, and sexual deviancy augmented the widely held notion of Black workers as unwanted—as competitors, criminals, or sexual predators bent on consuming white resources and "amalgamizing" white communities. At times, such logic flattened social differences and rendered class nearly extraneous. White workers, hyper-aware of their border statuses, regularly countenanced bloodshed through vocabularies of economic threat, citing perceived competition for housing and jobs in a region where such anxiety could be maximally exploited. Yet murderous anti-Blackness was just as often generated by top-down moral panic and racialized psychosexual fears, seemingly divorced from the so-called economic "rationality" of work and wages. As the journalist Ida B. Wells observed regarding the economics of lynching, other times such violence radiated from the middle outward, led by petty-bourgeois master artisans, modest freeholders, and minor proprietors—those who sat atop small hierarchies and possessed just enough power to galvanize local constituencies, but not enough to feel materially or psychologically secure amid rising African American employment, property ownership, and physical movement.[70]

Capitalists, too, were instrumental in creating the conditions of anti-Black group violence. This was true even in cases where they accepted or encouraged the presence of non-white populations, played no direct role in the fighting, or used their platforms to denounce it. Elites granted various forms of consent to anti-Black mobs, promoted ruthlessness through workplace relations and discipline, and fomented racial animus between workers by reinforcing stereotypes about African American inferiority or parasitism, thus eroding Black worker legitimacy. What's more, owners who condemned the

violence typically attempted to turn a fundamentally social problem into an individual one by singling out particular parties or locating causation within psychological derangement (rather than social structures). The "better citizens" also deflected blame from themselves and their own social class by condemning "lower whites," even when violence involved or was provoked by the professional classes. In other words, knowingly or not, elites underwrote the conditions for raced and classed violence by overseeing what capitalism does mechanistically: seeking, moving, and exploiting pliable workers; segmenting those workers by "skill," pay, rank, race, gender, or physical location as to undermine labor organization; promoting an ideology that equated condition and status with merit and individual worth; and advancing the overall course of material inequality.

Throughout the Gilded Age, that oppression continued to include the methodical vilification of the borderland's propertyless poor and Black working class, whose condition was "particularly precarious" relative to Black workers in other border cities.[71] With few legal protections and no institutional bases for organization or arbitration, African American wage earners, many of them formerly enslaved, nevertheless understood their interests as what one observer termed a specific "class of laborer."[72] They attempted to bargain collectively, sometimes banding together and walking off the job in the face of discriminatory conditions. Particular militancy sprung up on the levees, for instance, where rousters (river-based deckhands and longshoremen) launched work stoppages, coordinated with regional labor actions, and blocked white strikebreakers from their job sites. Of course, packet owners from Louisville to Cairo, and from St. Louis to Memphis, met such actions with systematized retaliation, vengefully denying Black workers the right to negotiate as a group or "interfere" with company property.

No matter their plight or position, African American workers who violated political or imagined borders that were intended to connect white but separate Black communities sparked backlash as postwar migration threatened to alter the region's racial-labor formulation. Southern Illinois especially exhibited what one observer termed a "formula for violence" between the end of the Civil War and the early twentieth century.[73] Although feuds, lynchings, "race riots," labor turmoil, and Klan wars in Little Egypt were sensationalized, exoticized, and treated as immutable by businessmen, politicians, and editors outside the region, the "circumstances" in which they existed were historically determined and their "formulas" stemmed from relations of production, the original being bonded and wage labor. Standard scarcity and "othering"

fears constitutive of capitalist inequalities were heightened in the region—in the seam between slavery and freedom—owing to the deep legacy of salient boundaries bisecting racialized labor regimes.

Like the Jim Crow South as described by James Baldwin, the borderland paid "a prohibitive price" to keep Black people segregated or disallowed.[74] White mobs neither established a free white labor utopia, as evidenced by enduring Black populations, nor imposed Black docility, as worker actions and civil rights protests in Cincinnati, Louisville, and Cairo would attest. But they did succeed in retarding labor organization, stifling class consciousness, and reinforcing existing hierarchies. To be sure, wages, housing, and union density in the borderland surpassed that of the South, and exclusion, through market restriction, afforded income gains for some white workers. Yet, by undercutting broad worker cooperation, drawing negative national publicity, licensing social difference, empowering owners, and enhancing the fascistic seductions of racial determinism and politics as revenge, anti-Black violence, on balance, appeared to hinder more than aid the lived condition of the region's working people.

All hope was not lost, however. In Part Five, "The Vanguard," we see how industrial relations in coal mining during the 1890s, and unionization within the United Mine Workers of America, which centered on comity and disciplining the market, offered remarkable challenges to the free white labor consensus. Industrial capitalism created palpable tensions between exclusion and integration in the service of either corporate profit or class politics. Black workers, facing various levels of coercion, migrated northward for employment; white owners sought pliable (often Black) labor in the South, sometimes as strikebreakers; union miners, both white and Black, attempted to strengthen their unions and limit the importation of non-union men in order to protect their bargaining power and preserve their livelihoods; and the support of the white petty bourgeoisie caromed between mine owners, who possessed greater political influence but were often viewed as outside the primary community, and union workers, who wielded associational power as neighbors and customers.[75]

In this context, borders proved malleable and resilient, offering workers, white and Black, certain forms of protection. Lower Midwestern miners were far more successful than their less organized, more peripheral southern counterparts in pressuring labor markets in part by limiting strikebreakers. The persistence of split markets, as well as varying labor laws and worker rights, meant that given workers had a vested interest in upholding political

and property boundaries that were legally constructed for the direct benefit of landholders, speculators, and capitalists. There were, of course, myriad circumstances in which migration across state borders undercut unions, depressed wages, and had other negative consequences for working people on the "strong" side of the border, and prejudice against less "assimilable" workers—whether Black, Asian, or southern and eastern European—remained rampant. Nevertheless, countless unionists understood that the long-term solution to this loss of worker power was not exclusion based on race or even union status, but wider labor incorporation. After all, capitalists, they argued, not strikebreakers, stood to benefit most from increased migration and an inflated labor supply. But for various reasons, including divisions among workers and the far greater clout of owners, inclusion of such proportions proved difficult to fully conceive, much less functionally achieve.

Racial hierarchies died even harder. Although white miners sometimes reaped the short-term social and psychological benefits of restriction, anti-Black racism was mostly "fool's gold."[76] In particular, the perpetuation of the "negro scab" as both a material threat and racial bogeyman facilitated the popular concoction of African Americans as an "anti-union category," as Black workers after the Civil War were often "systematically eliminated from the larger labor movement and virtually forced into 'anti-labor' roles such as strikebreaking."[77] The free white labor ideal was, as evidenced by its "white" limiter, conditioned by prevailing ideologies concerning racial superiority. But as its "free labor" descriptor implies, it was also an understandable response to economic dependence and the exploitation of wages, and thus represented a striving for self-ownership and a compulsion to protect what little power they did possess, sometimes at all costs. It is therefore unsurprising that labor conflict often correlated with racial violence, shaped by fears of non-white "invaders," especially from the former slave states.[78] This was true even among union miners, whose industrial form engendered far greater interracialism than craft unions. Indeed, racial strife in the northern coalfields was characterized by split labor markets that became breeding grounds for racialization. "In order to protect their jobs and keep their towns lily white, the established miners used all means at their disposal, physical as well as political, to prevent blacks from entering their communities," historian Ronald L. Lewis maintains. In other words, some miners pushed white racial solidarity because they viewed "outsiders" (and especially Black ones) as removed from the "legitimate social sphere."[79]

Mine work was not, however, a one-dimensional story of inviolable bor-

ders and unrepentant exclusion. The dangerous and close-quartered character of mine toil favored a more inclusive union form that compelled members to temper or relegate race—to question and set aside their racial preferences and prejudices—in the name of building worker power. Industrial unionism required some degree of multiracial synergism, and white-established miner unions, notably the United Mine Workers (UMW), whose founding documents called for racial equality within the workplace, tended to be far more racially integrated than white-established professional-class institutions. Indeed, union miners, including Black correspondents to the *United Mine Workers' Journal* such as Richard L. Davis in southern Ohio and "Willing Hands" in southern Indiana, crafted new class-based universalist discourses, using "wage slavery" as a solidaristic concept that united workers across racial lines—and across sectional borders. Disagreements between discourse creators, moreover, pivoted not on racial exclusion or inclusion but on degrees of partnership. Arguing that there were other forms of "enslavement" rooted in racial oppression, and that, for Black workers, "non-discrimination" alone was not synonymous with justice, Davis, Hands, and others debated the role of race-specific policy, even pushing the union to take up "race issues" beyond the workplace, including lynching, convict leasing, and voting rights. Finally, most union writers, Black and white, recognized the importance of interracialism in the pursuit of bread-and-butter goals. They also, by extension, acknowledged the shortcomings of interracial elite cooperation, often led by white industrialists—men such as Evansville's Albert C. Rosencranz—who engaged in "industrial training" and race "uplift" philanthropy while brutally exploiting their own workers.

In this sense, *The Ragged Edge of Freedom* both builds on and refines the arguments of historians Alonzo Ward, William Tuttle, and Ronald Lewis by spotlighting exceptions to the racialized split labor model through interracial miner movements (and moments). These included union miners debating the meaning of racial inclusion; censuring Jim Crow practices; flouting history, culture, and the color line through mass confrontations with capital; and denouncing xenophobia and race prejudice in attempts to overcome the catastrophic myth of the racialized strikebreaker, or the calamitous notion that "scabbing" was a racial condition as well as an action on the part of nonunion workers.

In the end, union miners in the borderland were more remarkable in how they challenged rather than embodied the inheritance of free white labor. On the one hand, the preservation of the union's tenuous gains sometimes

involved acrimony, including disproportionate violence, against non-union and non-white workers, notably African Americans and immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, which was then justified through cultural as well as material arguments or the racialization of non-union miners and the conflation of "negro" with "scab." On the other hand, union miners functioned as what political scientist Michael Goldfield terms a "vanguard role" within U.S. labor through "broad-based, solidaristic, militant actions" and a "breathtaking" willingness to defy local, state, and federal authorities. The vanguard of this vanguard, as it were, emerged in places like southern Illinois, where "leading sectors within the industry . . . pulled along the rest."[80] Union miners, whose industrial form often bred a type of proto-anti-racism, proved most exceptional not in the robustness of their racial identities, but in their willingness to subordinate those identities in the name of a class project.

These trailblazing colliers had defied a century of exclusionary laws and customs by orienting an ideal of community centered not on race, but on class and union status. In many ways, that achievement was remarkable. But two kinds of "race wars" threatened to destabilize their vulnerable conception. The first was an assault from the left, by Black workers as well as Communists, who questioned the moral and practical efficacy of comity. Recognizing the insufficiency of "non-discrimination," they maintained that institutional equality bylaws in a white supremacist society were, in practice, synonymous with neither racial parity nor justice. The second assault came from the right, by the political and business class whose members had a vested interest in portraying all worker-on-worker cruelty as unmoored from exploitation and basic material relations. Such narratives dovetailed with mainstream newspaper accounts, which tended to depict class conflict by making "violence *itself* the story," and racial violence in particular.[81] Both owners and the press explained labor conflict as a result of cultural deficiency, or as simply another example of the perpetual antagonism between Black victims and degraded white people—as timeless "race war."

Part Six, "Race Wars," scrutinizes the incompleteness of miner vanguardism and the contests over popular narratives that arose from labor battles. Industrial unionism centered on racial comity had facilitated broad unionization, but as a strategic horizon, it failed to adequately challenge racism beyond the workplace, thereby placing self-imposed and interlocking limitations on union recruitment, magnitude, and potency. Relatedly, clashes between capital and labor that involved African American and immigrant strikebreakers

jelled with familiar exclusionary discourses and reinforced popular attitudes about the deportability of non-white people. Racialized labor violence led the Illinois towns of Virden, Pana, Carterville, and various surrounding communities to either strengthen or directly adopt sundown policies in 1897 and 1898. In Evansville, anti-strikebreaker actions took on a racial dimension in the summer of 1899. Paralleled by a white supremacist and anti-worker Blue-Gray reunion, attacks on Black workers proved an antecedent to the city's "race riot" of 1903, which reoriented the politics and racial demography of the region.

Even larger instances of anti-Black group violence occurred in two of the nation's most militantly class-conscious regions, in Springfield in 1908 and East St. Louis in 1917, where intraclass belligerence paralleled both racialized conceptions of class formation (or the notion that a legitimate "worker" was white) and the immediate threat of labor competition. Anti-union campaigns elsewhere resulted in union attacks on Black strikebreakers, rhetorically and physically, and on Black people generally. Many such episodes were not anti-Black pogroms; others began as labor conflicts that devolved into wider racial restrictions and, in some cases, massacre. In virtually all cases, union leadership denounced both worker-on-worker violence and the racial prejudice that often underwrote it; some, including organizers William Schaife and Charles H. Lewahl, censured the very notion of "*negro* scabs."[82]

The rank and file, meanwhile, explained their actions as a defense of their industrial brotherhood, and thus of their homes and livelihoods. In many instances, Black union members participated in assaults on replacement workers, white and Black. Yet the raced dimensions of such conflicts—the racial stigma attached to strikebreaking and the exploitation of that stigma by owners and the pro-business press—sometimes facilitated wider attacks on African Americans. Conflicts between unionists and strikebreakers, perceived by many as little more than white-on-Black brutality, may have commanded community support and, in most cases, strengthened the citadel of district and local unions. However, by taking on a decided racial quality, often through little fault of the union miners, such violence also dented the capacity for comprehensive, long-term interracial organizing both in and beyond the mining industry. Put another way, the legal and cultural legacies of free white labor, the sheer muscle of capital, the fragility—or at times, utter isolation—of Black-white unity within the mines, capitalists' deployment of race as a wedge within a relatively non-discriminatory union, and the failure of the union vanguard to implement a sustained anti-

racist (rather than interracial) program all set the stage for broader reaction against African Americans.

Xenophobia also became a mono-causal explanation for worker-on-worker violence that, despite containing racial, ethnic, or nationalistic inflections, was often rooted in labor competition. The most notorious instance of working-class maelstrom affecting union protection, which the press framed as ethnic hatred or mindless "savagery," occurred in Herrin, Illinois, in 1922. To owners, that a mass murder of strikebreakers had occurred in one of the most densely unionized parts of the country offered proof of the inherent reptilianism of organized laborers in the borderland. Old exclusionist ideas may have shaped labor violence itself, but they especially shaped discourses surrounding it. Intraclass conflict, reduced ancient predisposition, gave newspapermen across the nation cause to summon timeworn stereotypes about Little Egypt "darkness" and the deviant history of its "backward" people. Pundits dehumanized "union murderers" as "vermin," underlined regionalized class categories by labeling them "white trash," recalled sectional hatreds by casting them as "secessionists," and summoned anti-Indian tropes by likening them to the "savages" of the Great Plains.

From one perspective, worker-on-worker cruelty exposed the limitations and vulnerabilities of interracial industrial unionism in mining and the persistence of exclusion in other industries. Racial prejudice skulked behind nearly every labor action and class confrontation, reinforcing owner supremacy to determine labor conditions, break strikes, and transport replacement workers. Such discord—beget by union officials through interpersonal racism, xenophobia, anti-socialism, and the ultrapatriotic drives during World War I—also spoke to the white working-class absorption of capitalist ideology. Indeed, racially qualified formulations of worker rank including "white slavery," "Negro scabs," "idle Negroes," and "cheap Black labor"—each crafted in response to perceived perversions of "free white labor"—reflected entrenched ideas regarding not only racial hierarchy, but also merit, mobility, thrift, efficiency, and worker commodification.

From another point of view, facile accounts of working-class culpability—of worker sadism, in fact—served to fortify capital's ideological project by erasing the material dimensions of labor violence, and thus constituted a form of class warfare. Miners and their families saw it as such. Coal diggers, Black and white, believed that it was not so much the inevitable clash between workers and owners that primed these powder kegs, but the owners' lust for profits, the presence of hostile agents, and specific acts of aggression directed

by them against the community. African American unionists in particular complicated the "race war" thesis by asserting that Black leaders had misled workers by misinterpreting anti-strikebreaker actions in the Illinois mines as purely anti-Black. In other words, union miners understood that worker bloodshed benefited operators and other elites who leveraged labor violence, which *was* frequently raced, as an excuse to undermine unions.

"Race war" was often, in reality, a form of group violence in which predominantly white unionists attacked both non-white and white "competitors" whose statuses *as workers* they viewed as threatening to their livelihoods and, in the case of the former, whose racial condition made them, in the eyes of many, particularly detested and expendable. Rather than mere racial crusades, these tended to be racialized labor conflicts, exacerbated by anti-Black or anti-immigrant prejudice, but grounded in political economy. The way forward, or perhaps the way *through* the "race war" conundrum lay not in bare inclusion and tolerance, but in the strategic self-interest of active solidarity through struggle, including identifying and perpetuating racial justice as a central aim of a capacious workers' movement.

New bold expressions of working-class antiracism lit the way. By the late 1920s, dissident miners, Black and white, demanded greater racial equality out of both moral conviction and tactical shrewdness. Basing their arguments on more sophisticated analyses of race—espoused by the Communist Party, the National Miners Union, and strains of the Progressive Miners of America—they took aim at the UMW's politics of "non-discrimination," as well as its increasingly bureaucratized form. The power of owners, national anti-union editors, politicians, and local anti-labor organizations, from the Chamber of Commerce to the Ku Klux Klan, was self-evident and, at times, seemingly insurmountable. Yet breakaway factions of the UMW established revolutionary "nuclei" in segregated and sundown mining towns including Ziegler and Eldorado, launched interracial strike actions in places like Pana, where the residue of racial banishment one generation earlier still permeated, and organized in Klan hotbeds including West Frankfort and Harrisburg.

Renegades such as William and Ora Boyce, Black organizers in the National Miners Union, confronted the borderland's free white labor legacies by attempting to convince white workers that Black civil rights served their direct interests as well, and by promoting militant class struggle in what Fletcher Martin described as the very core of "the tradition of racial separatism." Their goal of "full social, industrial, and political equality for Negro workers against Jim Crowism" entailed not merely interracial unions or equal

representation and pay for Black workers, but also fighting racial injustice on other fronts.[83] Strategizing around the idea that African Americans comprised an especially exploited segment of the working class, the Boyces and other anti-capitalists advocated race-specific planks including opposition to segregation, lynching, colonialism, disenfranchisement, and other manifestations of race prejudice. Such a program was especially germane in southern Illinois because the region had, according to Black Communist James W. Ford, long been the site of "bloody class battles" in which negrophobia proved a cudgel, a fulcrum, and a bogeyman.[84] Although the National Miners dissolved in 1934 owing to changes in the party line, drives for union independence and the injection of Communists back into the UMW led the organization to renew its commitments to interracialism within the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Taken together, these developments constituted a revolutionary undertaking in a region observers had long maintained was an inland of inescapable reaction.

STILL, IT WASN'T ENOUGH. The promise of an interracial working-class program—antiracist work and the fight for democracy within particular industries and workplaces—did not sufficiently upend perennial exclusionary patterns that were both public and private, legal and cultural, and encompassed, at various times, state, county, and local statute and custom. In Cairo—the poster child for regional battles over racial inclusion, for both Black agency and anti-Black violence—it would take a full-on civil rights campaign to integrate basic public accommodations, and that protracted struggle resulted in yet another mass exodus. After decades of unequalled population loss (the largest drop of any county in the United States between 2010 and 2020, and an overall percentage loss of over 81% from its peak), the city today is one of the poorest cities in the Midwest.[85] Even where residents have not fled or been displaced, the borderland remains home to some of the whitest and least racially diverse counties in the United States.[86] Cincinnati and St. Louis, with its infamous Delmar Divide, a notorious racial and socioeconomic partition resulting from long-lived residential segregation policies and restrictive covenants, are commonly ranked among the most segregated cities in the country, with the highest Black/white Dissimilarity Indices.[87] This reality was thrust into the national consciousness in recent decades through the police murders of Timothy Thomas in 2001 and Michael Brown in 2014 and the swell of human rights protest they engendered. The resultant uprisings in Cincinnati

and Ferguson were predictable and urgent bottom-up responses to the continued distinctiveness of Black residential isolation, poverty, unemployment, gentrification impacts, educational and health disparities, and relationship to the carceral state.

The rural borderland, meanwhile, remained, in many ways, a different racial ecosystem, one of sundown rather than segregation. In 1972, fifteen years after Fletcher Martin's account and nearly a half century since the founding of the National Miners, historian John H. Keiser noted that "sooner or later thoughtful residents of scores of towns in Illinois ask themselves why there are no blacks in their communities."[88] That was certainly my experience growing up in rural southern Illinois and attending public schools that were virtually one hundred percent white. Throughout, I never received a satisfactory answer to Keiser's question. Only upon studying history in university and then graduate school did the racial makeup of my town, and my region as a whole, begin to make sense.

The historical record was clear, and the explanations were manifold. One could point to antebellum Illinois's racial exclusion laws, which barred free Black settlement. Or the state's Black Laws, which curbed the civil rights of Black residents. Or ferocious hostility to emancipation and Black diaspora during the Civil War era. Or the fear of "negro competition" and "negro scabs," which stimulated wholesale violence against Black communities. Or rigid segregation practices, baked into both customs and policies, that developed and evolved alongside periods of Black migration. Or the "race riots" that upturned Black communities in Evansville, Springfield, East St. Louis, and West Frankfort. Or the persistence of "sundown" rules and other local ordinances, official or otherwise, which deterred Blacks from entering all-white communities. Or racist policing and the prison-industrial complex, including the striking appearance of penitentiaries in rural and overwhelmingly white counties incarcerating heavily non-white inmate populations, the very existence of which is rooted in historic dispossession and expropriation—of land, rights, and surplus labor.

The Ragged Edge of Freedom seeks to integrate all of these phenomena into a coherent understanding of how class and race functioned historically in one region, especially through processes of aversion. This necessarily includes an exploration of—and speaks to general patterns concerning—how both are constructed and wielded over time, their relation to political borders and social boundaries, and, most critically, to property, the lifeblood of capitalism and the origin source, though not the only source, of racialization. The conclusions

are often grim, but they are not fully dispiriting. This story offers evidence of alternate paths, or, more precisely, attempts by working people to self-emancipate from the property regimes that not only generate excessive misery and inequality, but also create, reshape, and continuously exploit racial difference in order to sustain themselves. The end product is a place-specific examination of how capitalism's features—class oppression, racism, boundary-making, and the private ownership of natural resources and productive instruments—mutually constitute, animating and reinforcing one another, as well as how workers pushed back against the ruinous prospect of "all against all."

PART I

Fortress Free Labor

It was the media event of the year. Between August and October 1858 a series of debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas pitted a relatively unknown attorney and one-term congressman against the most formidable and ambitious Democrat in the country. Both participants drew on legal, historical, and moral precedents to outline competing positions over slavery in the western territories.[1] And while Douglas ultimately won reelection, the discourses raised the Republican profile, launched the party's first successful presidential candidate, and served as a coming out for a region that had finally shed its frontier reputation, capped by a young city of continental prominence, Chicago.[2] Although overall Democratic messaging became more proslavery during the late 1850s in response to the fast-advancing antislavery threat, the debates also illustrated how quarrels over "free labor," or the ownership of productive property as the basis of political independence, had grown all-consuming in Illinois politics. In fact, Lincoln confidant Orville Hickman Browning, a conservative Whig reluctantly turned Republican, predicted that the Lincoln-Douglas contest would come down to which candidate better articulated the "free labor question" to a wide swath of voters.[3] In a society that bordered two slave states and where Black people were excluded by law, halting the Slave Power was not the electorate's only concern; they also envisioned the *end* of slavery, and its apocalyptic aftereffects of racial migration and integration, as an economic peril. For most Illinois voters, Democrat and Republican alike, "free labor" and its analogues concerned not only the economics of self-ownership, which was the desired condition of virtually all Illinoisans, but also a host of assumptions regarding "negro competition." The

overriding question was, in some sense, straightforward: Which party could most convincingly safeguard the opportunities and life choices of the broadest range of white men?

To Browning's point, the debates soon became among the most famous "racial exchanges" of nineteenth-century America. Douglas's opening salvo in Ottawa clarified his position that the government was "made on the white basis . . . by white men, for the benefit of white men and their posterity forever." Painting his challenger as a "Black Republican," Douglas condemned Lincoln's history of intimidations toward racial liberalization, especially his suggestion that the Declaration of Independence applied to Americans of all races. Through what David Roediger calls "a highly racialized political language increasingly common among Democrats, and to some extent among their opponents," the Senator endorsed "preserving not only the purity of [white] blood," but also the shielding of the U.S. government from "amalgamation with inferior races." Even in Freeport, in far northern Illinois, debate audiences expressed their approval for Douglas's ideology by chanting "White men, White men!"[4] Meanwhile, in looking to evade the "amalgamationist" label, Lincoln upheld his belief in "physical differences" between Black and white people that would preclude them from ever living together on an equal basis. Though he hated slavery, and his white supremacy was admittedly far less venomous than his opponent's, Lincoln continuously reminded audiences that he, too, was a committed proponent of racial *in*equality.

Both candidates expounded on "free white labor" themes in seven debate stops over eight weeks, their racial inflections changing according to geography.[5] The Vermont-born Douglas had long maintained that his adopted state contained two sections: a far northern one where moral opposition to slavery prevailed (which Douglas tactically conflated with racial egalitarianism), and a southern one that was more antagonistic to the presence of Black people and amenable to sectional compromise. He explained party dynamics in the state through a racialized conception of regional space, pointing out that Republican support was "pretty black in the north end of the State; about the center it is pretty good mulatto and it is almost white when you get down to Egypt."[6] The Democrat also alleged that his Republican rival was a purely sectional candidate whose directives shifted depending on location, warning Lincoln that Jonesboro, in southern Illinois, would make any antislavery man "tremble in the knees."[7]

The Little Giant reiterated this point during the Galesburg debate, accusing Lincoln of sounding like an abolitionist in northern Illinois, then going

"down south" and pandering to the "Kentuckians, Virginians, and Tennesseans." Though both candidates tempered their white identity rhetoric during parleys in Ottawa and Freeport, racialized language grew common and less repentant as the debates moved south or west to Charleston, Galesburg, Charleston, Alton, and especially Jonesboro, deep in the heart of the region known as Little Egypt.[8] While it was in southern Illinois that Douglas most leaned in to his Democratic crowd, ramping up his racial theories while deriding "Fee-Jees," "Maylays," "savage Indians," and other "degraded races," he insinuated that Lincoln was unwilling to confront harder white supremacy in the state's southern bloc.[9] That Jonesboro was Lincoln's only appearance south of St. Louis during the campaign, as any further endeavor into the extreme southern portion of the state would have been "expensive and profitless," seemed to confirm Douglas's claim.[10] Steeped in Jacksonian traditions of white agrarianism and republicanism, Democrats in 1856 had won over 90 percent of the vote in the 9th Congressional District, which spanned eighteen of the state's southern counties; a mere 4 percent backed Republican presidential nominee John C. Frémont.[11] There was, in Lincoln's own words, "no use in trying" in Little Egypt.[12]

But Jonesboro was not simply a bastion of Democratic loyalty and anti-Black vitriol. It was also one of the poorest parts of the Midwest. The hills of Union County were populated disproportionately by small-scale farmers and tenant workers, with the percentage of destitute and propertyless rural whites resembling the slaveholding South.[13] Schools and public services were scarce; adult illiteracy was three times the state average. Lacking institutional and infrastructural ties to Midwestern markets (and perhaps internally "colonized" by such ties, especially through corporate acquisitions of cheap land and labor), the region remained relatively disconnected to the state's more commercially vibrant sectors. The Illinois Central Railroad bypassed Jonesboro in 1856, and the city would not gain rail access until 1875.[14] As a result, residents were relatively disengaged from electoral politics, borne out by low voter participation.[15] What's more, contemporaries described the county as an "outpost of southern racism."[16] Well into the twentieth century, biographers, often indulging stereotypes concerning rural poverty, characterized places like Jonesboro as not merely reactionary, but also ignorant, provincial, lazy, clannish, brutish, and, on occasion, populated by people who were less than fully human, perhaps even members of a separate "race."[17] Racial identity in the lower free states *was* in some ways heightened, as white supremacy manifested through regionally specific contexts of violence and exclusion. But

Little Egyptian "negrophobia" owed far more to systems of production and political economy, including the region's physical proximity to slavery, than to the supposedly timeless, defective culture presented by far-off editors and politicians.

Douglas exploited the sense of racial grievance among voters whom outsiders had long "othered," and there was a clear logic to such appeals. Home to less than thirty free Blacks at the time of the debates, Union County was wedged between two slave states.[18] Sharing a river border with Missouri and less than twenty miles from Kentucky, Jonesboro residents worried that any movement to manumit would result in a "negro invasion." Douglas spoke directly to this consciousness in a community where laborers and petty proprietors, who, out of feared loss of racial or material status, were especially susceptible to invocations of whiteness and against any whiff of abolitionism. Although southern Illinois Republicans charged Douglas and his "African Democracy" with elitism in shilling for slaveholders, the Little Giant defended state Black Laws as necessary to prevent Illinois from becoming "an asylum for old and decrepit and broken-down negroes that may emigrate or be sent to it."[19] Alas, Douglas's fixation on race and the preservation of the Fugitive Slave Law resulted in his vindication in Jonesboro and throughout the region. Democrats won 85 percent of the vote in the 9th Congressional District that fall, and the idol of Little Egypt was reelected by the General Assembly. And though Douglas's untenable approach toward the slavery question cost him the presidency, he would go on to win 80 percent of the district's vote against Lincoln in 1860.[20] His familiar insistence that the U.S. government was "made on the WHITE BASIS, by WHITE MEN, for the benefit of WHITE MEN" was reprinted on banners and newspaper mastheads across the borderland.[21]

The following two chapters, which survey the rise of a free white labor consensus alongside a mass politics of capitalist development, are less concerned with the question of whether the Lower Midwest was particularly race conscious than with *why* observers saw it that way and what social conditions structured its racial matrix. Douglas's portrayal of "jet black" upstate principles versus "almost white" Little Egypt—the Midwest as two sections with a contestable middle—oversimplifies the dynamism of demographics, racial attitudes, and local politics. Yet his rendering speaks to fundamental truths regarding borders, labor regimes, and racialization. Douglas's assumption that voters along slavery's border were uniquely responsive to white supremacist rhetoric highlights the role of property in establishing political boundaries, the function of violence in maintaining them, and the position of bor-

ders themselves in the race-making process, a process often linked to control through social partition. The collective fears associated with political borders and demarcations—both de jure and de facto, fixed and fluid, and conceded and contested—proved central to this construction of racial and class identities in the Lower Midwest, where what Roediger terms "an imperiled 'white politics'" was part of a loosely bipartisan understanding of free *white* labor as a capitalist ideology.[22] While more democratic than the slave labor alternative, the free white labor myth of equality of opportunity and continuous upward mobility for white men nevertheless individualized economic success and frustration. The failure to "rise" was personal, not structural; the inability of a group to "keep pace" was cultural, not rooted in oppression or injustice. This assumption, combined with partisanship and other factors, led free labor evangelists to stigmatize social groups and entire regions—a new type of "undeserving poor"—which intensified various forms of race-making.[23]

The preservation of a non-slave labor system where slavery was nearby, and the borders that separated the two, proved vital to the regeneration of white identity. Scarcity, in both expectation and reality, became an engine of difference and discrimination. As the Midwest's economic and political center of gravity shifted from the Ohio Valley to the Great Lakes with the so-called Yankee invasion of the 1820s, spokespeople within and beyond southern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois invented and popularized regionalized and politicized tropes and terminologies to describe the "backwoodsmen" of "backward" river counties.[24] While epithets such as "Suckers," "Hoosiers," "Bobtails," "Dimmicrats," "Butternuts," and "white trash" were rooted in partisan assault and moral panic, they were also class attacks, directed at the poor and the landless and those who had not acceptably embraced a rising capitalist ethos. For those targeted, regional stereotypes, and their insinuations of sub-humanity, also placed an added premium on "being white," the defense of which resulted in exclusionary policy, custom, and group violence that both perpetuated racial hierarchies and reflected and reinforced class stratification. In other words, Douglas's concept of "two Midwests"—and of the lower portion enduring a tenuous position between the plantation South and the industrializing North, between "Cavaliers" and "Yankees"—illustrates how deeply unequal material conditions across an emerging capitalist system both created and reconstructed popular notions of social difference, and of "the border" itself.

CHAPTER 1

Boundaries and Bondage

The story of the "white" Midwest began with French outposts along navigable waterways, Illinois Country settlements at Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Vincennes, and the introduction of African slavery in 1713. The corporate ambitions of the Ohio Company after 1749 opened the river valleys to settler colonists who sought to impose a new social order predicated on private, nonconsensually-claimed property and the expansion of chattel slavery through Indigenous displacement. Bloody jockeying followed, first by the French and British, then Anglo and American claimants. The drive for land and profit led whites to racialize Native people as alien, worthy of removal or extermination, and define the Ohio River as imperial dominion then territorial border. After U.S. nationhood, settlers formed permanent towns along the river systems of the Northwest Territory stretching from Marietta to Fort Washington to Shawneetown. This white peopling of the First American West arose from a southern diaspora that began as a trickle that turned into a flood of migrants who traversed the trans-Appalachian West—western Virginia, and North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky—and streamed into Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois during the first decades of the nineteenth century. Some took the Wilderness Road to Kentucky; others coursed down the Ohio River on flatboats and up land routes such as the Vincennes Trace, fanning out from the Wabash, White, and Illinois basins. The result was the creation of a new American region: the Northwest or simply the West, later the Middle West and, by the early twentieth century, the Midwest. That formation was predicated on extinguishing the land claims and lives of people who "white" Americans classified as "savage." Market demands and "civilizing" forces, includ-

ing steamboats and the extension of the National Road west from Wheeling, Virginia, facilitated Indigenous expulsion. Ethnic cleansing made way for the development of what promoters called a new "American race," the upwardly mobile and acquisitive "Western man."[1]

Yet most early Lower Midwesterners did not fit this capitalist ideal. Much of the region constituted what Douglas K. Meyer terms an "upland South culture" of poor and middling people from Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and North Carolina, compelled northward by the hope of social betterment.[2] Having "escaped" slaveholder economic and political control, these out-migrants would go on to "southernize" other places, populating territories farther west as part of an "advancing frontier."[3] Though slave state influence was strongest in southern Illinois, southern Indiana's Hill Country and large swaths of southern Ohio were dominated by colonizers born in Virginia and Kentucky.[4] These were also the seats of early political power, as a majority of Indianans and Illinoisans resided in the bottom third of the state into the 1820s. Such northbound settlers opposed slavery less for moral reasons than for how it reduced non-slaveholding whites to permanent inferior status. As historian Matthew Salafia maintains, they "sought to use the border to control their labor situation," making them, in some sense, the "vanguard of the free soil movement."[5] Most land-hungry migrants purchased small parcels and became subsistence farmers; others squatted or moved farther west.

Schisms soon arose between settlers from the South and those from the Northeast. Party politics and popular culture would for decades feature and often weaponize these real and imagined rifts. The stream of migrant poor into the continental interior led observers to reinvent British stereotypes about backwoods "vagrants," giving birth to terms such as "cracker," "squatter," and by 1830, "redneck."[6] The first transplants to the deepest southern portions of the Midwest were, according to one early history, disproportionately title-less incomers drawn from the poorest populations of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia, and some from North Carolina, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.[7] Another chronicler described settlers in Clay County, Illinois, as "belligerent" and honor-bound men who resembled the Irish in both their dress and penchant for fighting.[8] Traveling the Illinois frontier, New Yorker Sarah Aiken classified the families she encountered, like many easterners did, as "a low set of people" from Kentucky and Tennessee.[9] Even enslaved individuals commented on the "abject and degraded" condition of "lazy" whites of southern Indiana-Illinois.[10] Critics soon drew on civilization tropes to define these "mangy varmints infesting the land." Writing in 1827, English excursionist James Hall noted sharp

distinctions between the "hardy race" of first homesteaders from the South and more recent migrants from New England and the Middle States, with the latter often caricaturing the former as, according to another visitor, "ignorant, coarse, [and] lawless." Although he admired the bravery of "genuine woodsmen," Hall pathologized early Midwesterners similarly to other backcountry people, as, on the one hand, a distinctive "race" of "miscreants," but also "the poorest and idlest of the human race—averse to labor, and impatient of the restraints of law and the courtesies of civilized society."[11]

Hall's depiction of dubious humanity became typical. According to historian Nancy Isenberg, eastern commentators increasingly characterized the log cabin dwellers of the Northwest as "white savages," prone to "brawling" and "eye gouging," and accompanied by unsightly wives and litters of filthy children. They also possessed distinctive (if not explicitly racial) physiognomies: swarthy complexions, gangly limbs, protruding jaws, and toothlessness. Another circa 1830s visitor added phenotypes to Aiken's caricature, detailing the typical southern Illinoisan as "gaunt, long-limbed, lanthorn-jawed, Jonathan" ("Jonathan" being a generic phrase for "American").[12] By the 1830s, according to one account, northern Illinoisans believed the prototypical southern Illinoisan to be "a lank, lean, lazy, and ignorant animal, but little in advance of the savage state; one who was content to squat in a log cabin, with a large family ill-fed and ill-clothed, idle, and ignorant children."[13]

In reality, these beggared uplanders were less "lank" and "brutish" than famished and desperate. David Hackett Fischer admits that early southern Illinois experienced higher than average rates of violence, but he also acknowledges that such violence was "instrumental" rather than random, and "often encouraged by local elites."[14] While that emerging regional gentry often viewed the landless poor and, later, the industrial "drifting class," as antithetical to economic development and notions of social progress, easterners coded rivermen, roustabouts, gamblers, pirates, woodsmen, and tenants—the lumpenproletariat of the middle border—as socially inferior, if not subhuman.[15] The existence of such "squatters," whether physically distinct or simply imbued with good-for-nothing "coon and catfish" habits, laid waste to the myth of continuous upward mobility in the West, presenting, in some sense, the earliest challenge to a coherent capitalist ideology rising out of the frontier.[16]

Stereotyping cut both ways, but not equally. Southern Illinoisans also formed reductive opinions of their "miserly" and "inhospitable" neighbors to the north, even casting them as members of a different group based on distinct physical traits, with Egyptians pegging "genuine Yankees" as a "tricky *race* of

peddlers." Locals fabricated tales of river violence to shape the expectations of—and intentionally shock—naïve newcomers from the East.[17] But discrimination cast from north to south was even more acute, owing to a widening material divide between the two blocs. The gradual shift in the Midwestern balance of power from log cabin to cultivated tract, from outpost to town, and, eventually, from the Ohio River to the Great Lakes, exacerbated and reshaped the nature of "Yankee" rhetorical fire. As the river counties declined in economic and political influence, the better financed characterizations prevailed, often morphing into a moral binary of industrious northerners vs. slovenly upland southerners. One Indiana Whig described in 1845 how discrete settlement patterns had given way to full blown cultural cleavages: "The enterprising Yankee of Northern Indiana despises the sluggish and inanimate North Carolinian, Virginian, and Kentuckian in the southern part of the state."[18] "Where New England emigrants do not venture," an Illinoisan added, "improvements, social, agricultural, mechanic, or scientific rarely flourish."[19] The notion of Yankee ingenuity contra "poor white" savagery proved tenacious. Stereotypes about downstate poverty, often coupled with analysis of the so-called boorishness or inhumanity of the migrant poor, would be refitted to suit a host of political purposes, including accelerating debates over slavery.

The cultural distinctions between free and slave state transplants need not have been hyperbolized to be discernible. Early statehood in Indiana and Illinois was dominated by the Democratic Party and, though committed to the democratic populist Andrew Jackson, many of its imperial-minded leaders were the sons of southern planters. Of Illinois's first seven governors, six were born in slave states, as were nearly all of their lieutenant governors.[20] In Indiana, this faction was known as the "Virginia Aristocracy," and their hostility toward social reform combined with racial-economic competition fears among poor and middling whites to forge an intense anti-Black legal and cultural framework.[21] These slave state transplants, rich and poor alike, were more likely to grow corn and raise hogs. Some even farmed tobacco and, on rare occasions in deep southern Illinois, cotton. Formal education was rare in areas of upland southern settlement, and referendums revealed that opposition was strongest in the southern counties, where residents associated public schooling with moral patronization. By 1840, Illinois and Indiana had the highest illiteracy and lowest school attendance rates in the free states, prompting education reformer Caleb Mills of Wabash College to launch a campaign to cure "Hoosier backwardness" by financing common schools and replacing "the current race of pedagogues."[22]

But the region's biggest distinction—and what its critics viewed as the source of its "backwardness"—was not self-imposed or cultural; it was economic. "Pursued by poverty" across the Ohio River, early settlers possessed strikingly little capital. As reflected in antebellum farmland values, rural people in southeastern Ohio, southwest Indiana, and all of southern Illinois (excepting the counties adjacent to St. Louis) experienced higher rates of general privation. Not only did most southern-born migrants arrive with fewer resources, south to north settlement meant that they were more likely to inhabit areas with less agricultural potential. These included flood-prone river bottoms, especially in Illinois, and hilly and forested portions of lower counties: the Appalachian foothills of southern Ohio, Indiana's Hill Country, and the "Illinois Ozarks" or Shawnee Hills at the tip of the Illinois basin. In fact, speculators deemed the land nearest the Ohio River the "Great Western waste of bottom land." Compared to the "corn belt" of limitless flat lands to the north, fertilized by prehistoric glaciation, the western lowlands were "old and poor," rugged with heavy rainfall and damaged by erosion. As late as 1844, *Home Missionary* described "the Wabash Country" and other southern portions of Indiana and Illinois as "never fully explored; much less cultivated," which connoted an absence of "proper" barns, wells, fences, and livestock. The connection between upland southern "waste places," or what one writer described as "dry and parched lands of error and sin," facilitated the construction of a "moral geography" in which poor farmland was associated with the "ignorance" of its residents, who ostensibly possessed "no *enterprise*, no good *society*, no *intelligence*." This lack of wealth, combined with cultural differences, led outsiders to code upland southern cultural traits as "backward," reinforcing the politics of regional underdevelopment and buttressing the myth of a rough western meritocracy in which, according to one New Englander, "ignorance is allied with poverty, and intelligence with wealth." Being poor was, in other words, "natural"; it was also deserved.[23]

Deteriorating political power within these districts resulted in a lack of railroads and other publicly subsidized infrastructure, shaping regional fortunes for generations. In his 1854 history of the state of Illinois, former governor Thomas Ford explained that southern Illinoisans were "generally poor" and, unable to own slaves or arable land in the South, mocked by both slaveholders and enslaved Blacks. "The consequence was that our southern settlements presented but few specimens of the more wealthy, enterprising, intellectual, and cultivated people of the slave states."[24] Ford's characterization, though wrongheaded in its claims about the connections between work,

culture, and wealth, nevertheless spoke to the realities of Midwestern migration patterns. Beginning with minimal net assets, even "industrious" uplanders, including many who managed to acquire tracts of productive land, struggled to self-subsist, let alone accumulate wealth. The "coon-skin tribe" of the border, with their "pack of cur dogs and troop of frowsy children" persevered in sharp contrast to the numerically smaller but capitalized "better classes" of landowners and commercial elites both within their own downstate regions and, increasingly, north of the National Road, completed in 1834. Southern Illinois county commissioners were compelled to establish "poor farms" to provide rudimentary shelter, some food, and, upon death, a pauper's grave, for destitute and infirm residents.[25] The rural borderland may have been emerging as a "white man's republic," but the benefits of whiteness obscured—as was often the point—exploitational relations and growing inequality *between* white men.[26]

SLAVERY PERSISTED IN AND FURTHER stratified the belly of the emerging "free states." Although the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 banned bondage and involuntary servitude, the Ohio River was no River Jordan.[27] The "boundaries of slavery and freedom" were ambiguous and contested as adaptable forms of unfree labor, including race-based chattel, permeated nominally free communities north of Kentucky.[28] French colonial legacies in the old *Pays des Illinois* died hard, as the ghosts of the *Code Noir* survived cessions to British and U.S. governments and then lingered into American statehood. Though early Midwesterners of European extract categorized one another into social hierarchies, they came together, and sometimes divided, over how to exclude the most definitively inferior race—Africans—while also adopting limited and localized elements of the slave system. And it was largely regional elites—French land barons, Virginia-born speculators, and elements of the rising merchant middle class—not the poor whites of popular stereotype, who created and leveraged the often murky distinctions between slave and free labor. Wealthy settlers from Virginia and Kentucky brought bound laborers, former slaves redefined as indentures, into Ohio and Indiana.[29] As such, fledgling Lower Midwestern politics were dominated by slaveholding factions who typically sided with southern planters on sectional questions and, in some cases, sought to introduce formal bondage into a state.[30] Spurred by economic depression, such as in 1819, legislative debates raged over the formal adoption of slavery, first in Ohio, followed by Indiana and Illinois. As proslavery

advocates lost those contests, political consensus pivoted increasingly toward Black restriction and a nascent "free labor ethos."[31]

While anti-Black antislavery laws took root in Ohio and Indiana during the first decade of the nineteenth century, early Illinoisans reinvented slavery through the servitude system.[32] Masters held inheritance rights to enslaved "French Negroes," and hundreds of upland southerners brought bonded people with them into the state, reclassifying their human "property" as lifelong and uncompensated "servants." While various forms of unfreedom abounded, the 1810 census recorded 168 verifiably enslaved people living in Illinois; by 1820 that number, registered as "servants," had risen to 917.[33] That year there were 190 listed "slaves" in Indiana, most of them in Knox and Gibson counties.[34] And although the 1818 Illinois constitutional convention, where downstate delegates claimed their border status provided them unique insight into the matter, had retained the 1787 ban on slavery, there were legal exceptions.[35] The first was based on criminality, shaped as always by discriminatory social processes, as convicts could be forced to perform uncompensated work. The other exemption was made for Gallatin County, where local businessmen used slave labor to extract profit from state-owned salt mines near Shawneetown and Equality.[36] All told, enslaved people in Illinois numbered in the thousands and worked across wide swaths of the state and in a variety of settings: domestic, agricultural, maritime, and, most notoriously, in the salt marshes along the Ohio River.

The 1820s and 1830s saw settler influxes from New England, the mid-Atlantic, and Western Europe that combined with Black enclaves to counteract proslavery politics and slowly curb the practices of servitude and slave hiring in the Gallatin salines. The limits of freedom also belied the existence of interracial activism. In addition to free communities of color in Cincinnati, Madison, Evansville, Vandalia, and Sparta, all of which were "stations" on the Underground Railroad, the rural Lower Midwest was interspersed with smaller Black settlements in defiance of state exclusion laws and local expulsions.[37] The abolitionist movement inaugurated by Benjamin Lundy in southeastern Ohio proved instrumental in overturning the state's anti-Black laws.[38] In southern Indiana, Quaker communities, founded as early as 1808, attracted a trickle of free Blacks, some of whom formed settlements in Jackson and Orange counties.[39] Prominent white abolitionists emerged in Evansville, including A. L. Robinson, a judge and Free Soil Party activist, and Willard Carpenter, who would serve as a Republican delegate at the 1860 convention. Whereas a majority of Black Illinoisans lived on humble farms in

rural areas, all-Black towns including Brooklyn in St. Clair County and Miller Grove in Pope County, as well as segregated urban ghettos like Cincinnati's "little Africa," reinforced perceptions of racial difference while also serving as "incubators of emancipation." Residents engaged in "freedom practices" that included legal suits and the circulation of abolitionist ideas.[40] Even in southern Illinois, the bosom of Midwestern anti-abolitionism, small communities of color formed abolitionist circles, disseminating antislavery literature and housing runaway slaves.[41] However, some Black outposts, such as the one white residents deemed "Nigger settlement" in Clay County, Illinois, were more self-isolated than others, and those in the deep southern portions of the Midwest ran the constant risk of re-enslavement.[42]

White people who aided Blacks faced ostracism, arrest, and reprisal. These included antislavery activists like Reverend John B. Mahan of Brown County, Ohio. In September 1838, Mahan was arrested on order of Governor Joseph Vance and delivered to Kentucky for trial for violating the "property rights" of slaveholders by "aiding and assisting certain slaves" in their own liberation. The following year Mahan was indicted again, this time for inciting a "riot" by rescuing a runaway slave from an Ohio constable. Despite abuses from local citizens, renegades such as Mahan and Black "pilot" John W. Hudson became causes célèbres on the antislavery scene.[43] White allies who assumed great personal danger also included farmers and businessmen. John Moore of Wayne County, Illinois, for example, quickly fell out of favor with his neighbors due to his reputation as an abolitionist and, more critically, because he employed a handful of Black workers on his farm. A native of Meigs County, Ohio, Moore was purportedly arrested (and later acquitted) simply for "inducing the colored race to locate in Southern Illinois."[44]

Blurred lines between slavery and freedom compelled white borderlanders to sharpen the legal and cultural distinctions between the races. As one southwestern Indianan recalled, though outsiders often supposed the Ohio River was a dividing line "between the poor down-trodden slave of the south from the paradise of the north," commerce and relations were fluid, and enslaved people frequently crossed the river to mingle or transact business.[45] Using the waterways as superhighways of escape, travel, and economic connection, runaways forged new identities as free persons and melded into populations of free and enslaved workers, further blending a labor regime in which the toil of hired out bondspeople often resembled that of free wage earners. Increasing Black populations and softening labor boundaries on dockyards, riverfronts, working-class neighborhoods, and small farms led uneasy whites

to forge harder racial barriers and compelled political leaders to attempt to impose a perforated Black-white border where none existed. Not distinguishing between free Blacks and enslaved people, whites' interchangeable use of "Black" and "slave" conveyed the demeaning nature of "white slaves" performing "nigger work" as well as growing trepidation over mobile Black workers and the ambiguous nature of freedom and bondage.[46]

Upland southerners, many of whom, unable to procure land or compete with slave labor, had left the South to escape planter political and economic monopoly, increasingly adopted both anti-Black and locally antislavery positions. Their vision of slavery as perpetually intact south of the Ohio River in order to preserve white labor north of it accentuated the political border between Kentucky and the Old Northwest. Though mostly a conduit of connection and compromise, the Ohio proved a constant reminder of the alien threat that resided just across the free state/slave state divide. A memorial to Indiana territorial governor Thomas Posey from residents of Harrison County explained the collective dread of white border residents: "We are opposed to the introduction of slaves or free Negroes in any shape. . . . Our corn Houses, Kitchens, Smokes Houses . . . may no doubt be robbed."[47] The use of racial panic to restrict the labor market falls under what historian Eric Michael Rhodes terms a "racialized free labor ideology," one that prevailed in Cincinnati and its hinterlands by the late 1820s, and often enforced through collective violence.[48] According to historian M. Scott Heerman, a rough consensus arose around "free soil and free labor . . . decades before the Republican Party advanced their version of free labor ideology."[49] To be sure, by the century's third decade future debates would no longer center on slavery's existence in the free states, but how best to practically defend the opportunities and life choices of white people.

"Freedom from slavery" meant racial exclusion, rationalized to safeguard common whites from the "evils associated with an oversupply of Negro laborers."[50] The uptick in Black Laws, colonization schemes, and negrophobic mobs across the urban North constituted a "first redemption" in response to Black gains during the Early National period, and such phenomena were perhaps strongest in states that were "born into freedom."[51] In 1804 and 1807 Ohioans passed laws requiring Black people to post bonds and produce their freedom papers upon entering the state. Modeled on traditional poor laws, the top-down anti-Black measures revealed what historian Kate Masur terms "the fungibility of race and class."[52] The laws may have reflected popular will from below, but they were devised at the top during Ohio's first legislative session.

Their legal enforcement in Cincinnati in 1829 led to the violent expulsion of half the city's Black population. One year later, white residents in Portsmouth, on the Ohio River, forcibly expelled the town's Black residents, with one hundred or more potential white employers, landholders, and businessmen, presumably, signing a petition in support of the removal.[53]

Similar laws passed in 1819 and 1829 in Illinois and in 1831 in Indiana, where Governor James B. Ray championed tighter immigration restrictions against Blacks and other "paupers."[54] All were part of a comprehensive system of Black Laws, rooted in French colonial and U.S. territorial precedents. What historian Joe William Trotter Jr. calls "mechanisms for creating white racial solidarity" that were "rooted deeply in the social forces unleashed by the intensification of capitalist development," Black Laws made it illegal for a Black person to hire a white person and for a white person to bring a Black person into the state for the purpose of freeing him.[55] Defined as someone with a fractional amount of "Negro blood," they also denied Black people the basic rights of citizenship, prohibited interracial sex, and deemed those without freedom certificates to be legal runaways, subject to arrest. In cities like Cincinnati, codes and custom often restricted Black access to "skilled" trades and designated certain kinds of labor as "the work of slaves," suitable only for Black people and the most despised European immigrant groups.[56] The enforcement of such laws depended on white citizens, who could seize and deliver Blacks for minor infractions, effectively deputizing white mobs.[57] When early state exclusion laws were not administered, some settlers advocated openly for Black "extermination," comparing it to the "race war" that whites had waged against Native people.[58] As southeastern Illinois politician Joseph Kitchell made clear, the very presence of Black people, even as "servants," constituted a "moral and political evil."[59]

Black Laws likewise ensured that the Black people who did arrive in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois were barred from voting, serving in militias, and marrying outside their race. The latter was a response to the widely held "miscegenation theory" which held that the race-mixing prevalent in slave states would eventually produce "a compound of the human species."[60] Indiana and Illinois, which made no provisions for the education of Black children, also forbade them from testifying in court.[61] Iowa and Indiana adopted exclusion laws in 1851 and 1852, respectively, framed as the ultimate "border protection."[62] Indiana politicians even determined that revenue from exclusion law violations would go toward a colonization fund. With legislators warning that their counties were being "overrun with vermin," downstate Indianans sup-

ported Black exclusion and colonization at rates well above the state average; in the ring of Ohio River counties from Clark to Posey, that support was virtually unanimous.[63] One Posey resident warned that runaway slaves threatened to displace poor whites, the "dregs of offscourings of the slave states," who, although "incurably affected with the horrible gangrene of morals which slavery engenders," were preferable to free Blacks.[64] Such sentiment also prevailed in Illinois, where in 1848 voters endorsed, by a margin of nearly four to one, a new constitution that included a Black exclusion clause and appropriated funds for Black colonization. And although the provision garnered support in all parts of the state, opponents blamed southern Illinoisans. As one Springfield Whig wrote mockingly, "Sound the Loud trumpet o'er Egypt's dark sea, The people have spoken—and Egypt is free!" Five years later, in a bill sanctioned by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Moore v. Illinois* and sponsored by John A. Logan of Murphysboro, the legislature banned Black migration through the nation's most draconian exclusion law.[65] Logan defended the legislation in regional terms, arguing that, according to Masur, it "offered long-sought relief to the state's southern region, where white residents needed protection against an influx of paupers."[66]

THOUGH RACIALLY RESTRICTIVE LAWS WERE only sporadically enforced, they led Eric Foner to speculate that anti-Black prejudice was more severe in parts of the Old Northwest owing to proximity to the slaveholding South, which heightened fears that manumitted slaves might become economic competitors, as well as the region's flatter class stratification and greater social mobility. Whereas the color line in the East was relatively settled, the parameters of race and class in the West were more up for grabs and in need of being forcefully established.[67] While a maturing abolitionist movement came to emanate from Ohio's Western Reserve and Chicago, the "white" inflection of "free labor," common across the North, grew more pronounced along slavery's border. Written in 1823 to dissuade voters from holding a constitutional convention, Morris Birkbeck's *Appeal to the People of Illinois* embodied this embryonic free labor argument, with both its economic and racial components. The Edwards County resident maintained that slavery would degrade honest toil, marginalize middling white people, and transform the region into a hierarchy of rich planters and poor whites living under constant threat of slave revolt—a veritable Santo Domingo.[68] Citizens in Birkbeck's southern Illinois increasingly believed that opportunity for those "on the make" was dependent on mono-racialism. Whereas in the white imagination, though

not in legal and demographic reality, to be "Black" was to be "slave," promises of security, both material and psychological, involved restricting not only slavery in their own communities but Black people altogether. And that restriction meant preserving the status quo of the slave system in Kentucky and Missouri.

The concept of the "free white labor of the North," in popular usage by the 1830s in response to the growing assertiveness of both proslavery and abolitionist politics, contrasted the idealized Midwest with the "slave Black labor of the South."[69] As evident in the emerging river metropolises, the relatively fluid racial designations of the eighteenth century, which resulted from greater degrees of white dependency, gave way to hardened ideas about "white workers" that further separated Black and white wage earners. David Roediger concludes that the language of burgeoning capitalism made "white" synonymous with "worker" and "Black" synonymous with "slave" while underscoring the supposed unnaturalness of white dependency through concepts such as "wage slave" and "white slavery." Despite the prevalence of phrases like "white nigger," "work like a nigger," and, more commonly, "white slaves," the Lower Midwest's proximity to the peculiar institution surely heightened the desire of white workers to define their toil as distinct from "Black" labor. As political scientist Adolph Reed Jr. notes, "In a rigidly hierarchical social order based on ascriptive status, the inclination to differentiate oneself from groups consigned to the bottom, while not laudable, is reasonable and understandable."[70] Indeed, by the mid-1830s white Ohioans were abandoning the word "servant," which coded "unfree" and therefore "Black," in favor of the more respectable "help."[71] Meanwhile, incipient class politics arose in Cincinnati, as well as in the river commercial and small-scale manufacturing cities of New Albany and Evansville. Through an anti-aristocratic producerism that pitted wage workers, artisans, and "productive" owners against bankers and "non-productive" capital, Jacksonians utilized—and in some ways pacified—this budding (if "schizophrenic") class consciousness while also exploiting its racial dimensions.[72]

Because freedom transformed slave renegades into economic "competitors," the term "free white labor" manifested in the interdependent process of restricting the labor market and controlling Black populations. Whites in southern counties recognized the property rights of masters and cooperated with the slave-seeking posses in order to regulate Black movement along the border.[73] In what amount to a "reverse underground railroad," profit-chasing slave hunters and regulator bands administered vigilante justice, often func-

tioning as lynch mobs in the event that non-white persons defied local and state authority. Border free-state newspapers honored slaveholder requests to publish reward advertisements for escapees, shaping popular opinion and transforming instruments of public record into invaluable tools of the slave system and mediators of non-white population control.[74] When courts were involved, certification was often required for the removal or transfer of Black "servants" (enslaved or formerly enslaved people) from one southern Illinois county to another.[75] Law enforcement also demanded Blacks prove their freedom in court. In Shawneetown, where bondspeople continued to grind in state-sanctioned salt mines, judges ordered deeds of manumission and certificates of freedom, restoring "natural liberty" to formerly enslaved people under the strict condition that they be "emancipated and ordered removed from the state."[76] Courts declared free Blacks without papers such as William Wilburn of Gallatin County to be "runaways," committing them to sheriff's custody, then to removal through sale.[77] Though elites often opposed the property damage and negative press that accompanied mob actions, editors and politicians also encouraged Black expulsion and approved of its results. In some cases, such as in New Albany, city authorities marshaled public resources for the purpose of Black removal.[78] Whether in or outside the law, by the early 1840s the subjugation and periodic banishment of Black people was, according to one observer, "extending all along the Ohio River."[79]

Free white labor implied the license to not only expel but kill without legal recourse. Intensifying in relation to economic panics and sectional crises, material and psychosocial fears spurred whites across the class spectrum to cite supposed violations of property and womanhood as justifications for violence. Businessmen with ties to the South looked to protect the status quo, and elites typically supported if not openly participated in collective anti-Black violence. White workers, meanwhile, dreaded wage competition from freed Blacks and resisted the breakdown of racial distinctions that provided them even meager social favor. All classes of whites worried about "mullatoization," or what one traveler in southern Ohio called the all-consuming "bugbear of 'amalgamation,'" which substantiated lynching across the region.[80] In 1846 in Vienna, Illinois, a Black adolescent was pelted by a white mob, publicly hung by his thumbs, then whipped to death on the city's main street for purportedly stealing money from white hotel guests (the wife of the hotel keeper later confessed to the crime).[81] In southern Illinois alone, there were lynchings in Carlyle in 1852, Cairo in 1854, Golconda in 1856, and Nashville in 1857. Though increased anti-Black violence resulted in the stagnation or depletion of Black

populations throughout the region during the sectional crisis, outnumbered people of color sometimes fought back against white mobs.[82] They did so in 1840 in Clarksville, Indiana, and the following year in Dayton, Ohio.[83] In July 1857 a group of Black laborers and fugitive slaves living on the river bluffs below Evansville's Union Township, within the city's largely German west side, drove off a mob that had assaulted their cabins, killing a German attacker.[84] But resistance incurred consequences. White Evansvillians threatened retaliation and circulated handbills calling for mass expulsion; Democratic editors fanned the flames and pressed for lynch justice. Portending violence ultimately compelled Black residents to flee the west side in droves, and Evansville's Black population as a whole declined during the 1850s; by 1860 there were no Blacks in Union Township.[85]

Areas of antislavery mobilization overlapped with hot spots of anti-Black and anti-abolitionist violence. Race riots—code for collective white-on-Black terror—first appeared in the region in the 1820s and peaked in the mid-1830s. Like the crowds historian George Rudé analyzes in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England and France, those in the Lower Midwest were discriminating, carefully selecting both their human and symbolic targets.[86] The 1829 riot in Cincinnati, where native southerners comprised only 15 percent of the population, constituted an especially brutal example of extralegal "border regulation" in response to growing racial and labor ambiguities.[87] Determined to preserve their livelihoods and identities amid a rising Black populace, a throng of mostly white laborers, encouraged by city elites, destroyed the Black neighborhood of Bucktown and forced fifteen hundred people to relocate. Other attacks followed in 1836, 1841, and 1843, and often involved well-known colonizationists, as well as members of the Anti-Abolition Society of Cincinnati, who promoted harsher strict enforcement of the Black Laws.[88] The most infamous mob action in the region took place in 1837 in Alton, Illinois, where "a well-organized nucleus of prominent citizens" murdered antislavery editor Elijah P. Lovejoy and destroyed his printing press.[89] Illinois Governor Thomas Ford explained that while the rugged western environments led even "puritan Yankees" to adopt a "mobocratic spirit," southern Illinois was unique for its gangs of "rogues" in the river counties, including "Regulators" and other parallel authorities.[90] However, rather than "white trash"—poor upland southerners or immigrant wage workers—large-scale mobs were often organized affairs led by the eminent native-born, or those whom historian Leonard L. Richards describes as "gentlemen of property and standing." These civic elites included merchants, lawyers, editors, bank-

ers, judges, ministers, and elected officials. In Cincinnati, where conservative activists proclaimed that antislavery firebrands were undermining "business and property," the mayor, postmaster, bank president, and even a former U.S. Senator were part of the coordinated anti-abolitionist movement.[91]

Yet regional stereotypes flattened this widening class stratum, as outsiders defined the borderland by its "white trash" element. State nicknames reflected popular ideas regarding the region's supposed primitivism, inverted gender roles, sexual mores, and a lack of education and hygiene among what Nancy Isenberg dubs the "backwoods personality." Indiana settlers became known as Hoosiers (or "Hooshers" or "Hooshiers"), and although the phrase's etymology is unclear, it contained a class intonation wherein lazy and dishonorable "Hoosier" men paired with violent, unrefined, gaunt, or bony-faced women, sometimes branded "Hoosierist" wives.[92] The moniker perhaps originated in the South, where it was synonymous with "a rough class of country people," comparable to "hillbilly" or "hayseed."[93] Others alleged that it derived from violent and honor-bound "husher" ruffians (evolved from the European "hussar"), or the "rough-looking class of flatboat-men" who navigated the Ohio and Mississippi. The *Indiana Democrat* explained that Hoosier drew from various labels either applied to or adopted by rivermen who never attained "respectable" status. These included "Ripstaver," "Scourger," "Screamer," "Bulger," "Ring-tailroarer," and others. According to the Progressive-era reformer Jacob Piatt Dunn, whose 1907 article "The Word Hoosier" explored the nickname's genesis, nearly all such theories possessed a few commonalities. Most insisted, for instance, that "Hoosier" began as a broad derogatory phrase, common in southern usage, that only over time became specific to Indianans, and perhaps especially the "rough, boisterous, uncouth, illiterate class" of uplanders.[94]

Other evidence suggests that "Hoosier" contained racial as well as a class connotations. Several theories concerning the term's creation cite its place in wider debates over superior and inferior "races" of European-American settlers in the First West. Traveling the state in late 1833, C. F. Hoffman believed Hoosiers to be a distinctive and unkempt "race" of people.[95] John Finley's "The Hoosier's Nest," which first appeared in the *Indianapolis Journal* in January 1833, provided an overview of this social type. It also put into popular literary use—and lent a degree of respectability to—what had been an oral expression. A newspaper editor and state legislator, Finley's hopeful portrait depicted a state coming into its own as honest toilers converted frontier cabins into prosperous farmsteads. Just the same, he likened Indiana's log dwellings

to wild animal nests, overfilled with barefooted, dirty faced, milk-and-mush consuming brood and their ham, venison, and johnny cake-eating parents. Finley described these untamed children as "Hoosieroons"—a play on the mixed-raced "quadroon" or "octoroon" (defined as one-quarter and one-eighth African, respectively), common in southern usage and in this case used to describe poor whites.[96] The expression caught on. Writing in 1835 to her sister near Philadelphia, recent transplant Sarah T. Harvey criticized "Hoosher fashion" and explained that southern Indiana cabins were known infamously as "Hoosher's nests."[97] Racial and class undertones changed with time, and as more Indianans co-opted the term, Hoosier as a pejorative implying "poor" or "less than fully white" gave way to positive insinuations of the rough-hewn and democratic "Great West." Like the mythological "Heartland" of "Middle America" from which it sprung, "Hoosier" became coded as "white."

Across the Wabash River, Indiana Hoosiers gave way to Illinois "Suckers." One theory regarding the label's origin held that "Suckers" were a type of fish consumed by early settlers.[98] A second suggested that the fish were migratory, much like the seasonal miners in northwestern Illinois who returned south to their Missouri and southern Illinois homes during the winter months. Still another posited that parched frontierspeople used straws to suck up water from saturated mud.[99] In any case, the "Sucker state" sobriquet was infused with alternate meaning when shrewd "Yankee" peddlers unloaded shoddy wares onto unsuspecting downstate consumers, or "Suckers." Those who paid too much for New England goods were said to be "Yankeed," and to assimilate to or embrace a supposedly backwoods existence was to be "Suckerized" (or "Hoosherized").[100] The thesis forwarded by Thomas Ford presupposed that the name was created by slavers who were happy to purge the region of its poverty-stricken denizens. Southern Illinoisans, the "poorer class of people . . . not able to own slaves" who had crossed the Ohio to escape "the imperious domination of their wealthy neighbors [planters]," were thus named for the useless sprouts or "suckers" that must be removed from tobacco before the plant becomes useable. "These poor emigrants from the slave states were jeeringly and derisively called Suckers," Ford contended, "because they were asserted to be a burden upon the people of wealth." In leaving for Illinois, poor whites "stripped themselves off from the parent system, and gone away to perish like the 'sucker' of the tobacco plant."[101] Regional outsiders viewed this "poorer class," like the discarded portion of the tobacco plant, as little more than "unwanted excrescence."[102] "Sucker," often qualified by political opponents as "Sucker Democrat," thus became a double entendre whose neg-

ative connotations—the drifter, the dupe, or a parasite leeching off the better classes—led residents to adopt the more innocuous "Prairie State" and, later, the triumphal "Land of Lincoln."

The upland southern core of the lower free states was Little Egypt, in extreme southern Illinois. Antebellum Egypt was marked by out-migration from the South, "ultra-Democratic" politics, and deep hostility toward Black people and any semblance of racial reform.[103] The roots of the region's nickname are unclear and were widely debated even in the nineteenth century. The prevailing explanation was that "Egypt" stemmed from the proliferation of Eastern Mediterranean town names in southern Illinois, notably Cairo, which itself derived from its location at the confluence of major river systems. A second framed the region in a distinctly positive light. Frequently recounted in southern Illinois newspapers in the 1860s, likely as a response to Republicans' defamatory use of the term, it held that the short growing season and poor harvest of 1831 drove farmers from central and northern Illinois southward to procure corn for their livestock. "Going down to Egypt," like the biblical sons of Jacob, became a common expression.[104] Geographically, commentators also designated "Egypt" in slightly varied ways. The *Chicago Tribune* defined it as the state's "southern portion." Others considered it to be all parts of Illinois east and south of the American Bottom—the Mississippi River flood plain in Illinois between Cahokia and Kaskaskia.[105] One historian describes Little Egypt as a sixteen-county "inverted triangle" with its vertex in Cairo and its base running east-west from Carmi on the Wabash River to Chester on the Mississippi. In either case, "Egypt" came to function as a slur against the region's so-called uncivilized inhabitants and their political disloyalty. By the 1850s, "Egypt" was as much a cultural designation—and political weapon—as a physical place.

The much-publicized divide between upstate and downstate Midwesterners was both real and perceived, substantive and exaggerated, originated in the economics of production and labor systems and, at the same time, impetuously and opportunistically constructed. It also changed alongside the shifting terrains of state politics and regional markets. Gaps in capitalistic development *within* the free states, as well as growing class stratification inside developed areas, led to more pointed cultural explanations as to why particular regions or peoples could not keep pace. As far back as the Doctrine of Discovery, European appraisals of "land use"—directed first at "idle" Indians, then poor whites, free Blacks, and Mestizos—had long countenanced imperial violence and merchant capitalist expansion in America.[106] Part of a larger claim to civ-

ilizational superiority, "misuse" and assertions of *terra nullius* (unoccupied land) served as "legitimating discourses" for settlers to justify enclosure, seizure, and removal, even when, as in the case of the Cherokee and Choctaw, the soon-to-be dispossessed adopted "modern" (planter-capitalist) modes of production.[107] By the 1840s, land-use debates combined with other concerns over "progress," including the broad imposition of wage discipline, to widen the political culture between northern and southern portions of the western free states. Ownership class inflections of the emerging free-soil ethos suggested it was not enough that land be free of slavery's presence; it must also be remade into private property, secured through legal title and backed by the force of the state. This meant, among other things, that propertyless whites—the "poor white trash" of the South that slavery had expelled onto free soil—were expected to defer to ascendent bourgeois capitalism by subordinating folkways to individual ownership and behaving as pliant workers.

Put differently, the division of the Midwest into "modern" and "backwards" blocs derived from a new economic system of capital accumulation, competitive markets, and wage labor. Its ideological components legitimized not only the ethnic cleansing or enslavement of non-white people, but also extreme intraracial inequality, social instability, and underdevelopment in Little Egypt, the Hill Country of Indiana, and parts of southern Ohio. While the Cleveland to Chicago beltway became characterized by extraordinary capital centralization, and the river counties in Ohio and Indiana saw high rates of commerce and manufacturing relative to the rural interior, developmental gaps, and subsequent political polarization, grew starker.[108] Although south-to-north migration throughout the Ohio Valley ensured that river counties were settled earlier, many only slowly shed their frontier traits, as market capitalism resulted in an intra-state imbalance of resources, with far fewer telegraphs, railroads, and mechanical farm implements downstate.[109]

Such changes were part and parcel of profound demographic shifts. By 1850, Illinois's southern-born population had plunged to 17 percent, with New York and Ohio passing Kentucky as the largest donor states.[110] Reflecting similar trends, Indianans moved their capital from Corydon on the Ohio River to Indianapolis in 1825. In Illinois, the turn in economic preeminence from the Ohio Valley to the Great Lakes spurred a tack in the state's political center of gravity, beginning with the transfer of the capital from Kaskaskia to Vandalia in 1819, then to Springfield in 1839. The rapidity of upstate development fueled regional prejudices concerning the so-called cultural defectiveness of the river counties. Targets included upland southern dress, corn-hog

foodways, cooking utensils, recreation, burial rituals, and speech patterns, which one easterner described as common "among the lower class of people in the South."[111] "Yankees" also attacked downstaters' property demarcation (worm fences rather than board and post fences) and housing (log cabins rather than balloon framed houses) as inadequate.[112] It was surely at that point of economic and political recalibration that the capital *S* in the new articulation of "Southern Illinois" or, later, "South Illinois" began to gain legitimacy. As Herbert K. Russell attests, "Southern Illinoisans increasingly felt that they were living in a separate state, and the rest of the state agreed."[113]

This "Yankee critique" of the borderland came to center on production, or the so-called incapacity of border people to define, extract, invest, or sell their region's resources. While commercial growth in Cincinnati and Evansville relied on diverse and energetic markets and public education, upstaters chided the subsistence or semi-subsistence farmers of Indiana's Hill Country and Little Egypt for not "improving," that is, properly managing or maximizing the profits of, farmland.[114] Critics held that this lack of "progress" was the result of uplanders' distaste for the revolutionary legal, financial, and transport changes now sweeping across the young nation, a quirk that editors, bankers, and land speculators often understood as a peculiar outgrowth of poor-white habits. Noting the downstate aversion to a growing capitalist hegemony, one author complained that while the "New England population" of Illinois bought and sold land at fit market prices, the "practice of holding up property from the market . . . still prevails extensively in the southern and some of the eastern parts of the state, and fully accounts for much of the difference in the degree of prosperity which is found there, and in the middle and northern part of the state."[115] Relative lack of engagement with national and regional markets implied that rural border people were somehow inadequate, as a lack of commercial dynamism became evidence of group inferiority. In other words, to be culturally superior was, increasingly, to be a superior businessman—a notion that achieved remarkable valency with the rise of a mass and modern party dedicated to state-sponsored economic development and the perpetuation of wage capitalism.

CHAPTER 2

What Is Black on One Side of the Line Is White on the Other

Admirers called it "the daughter of free labor." Some even wondered if the metropolis on the Ohio River might someday rise to become the political and commercial center of the nation. It was a reasonable prediction. Antebellum Cincinnati was at one point the largest city in the U.S. interior, its population jumping eightfold between 1830 and 1850. It was also a place of growing tension and contradiction: between racial exclusionists and free Blacks and abolitionist activists; absentee capitalists and worker associations; and German and Irish Catholic immigrants and a rising nativist movement. Above all, the "Queen City of the West," touted by investors as a beacon of civilization emerged out of the frontier wilds, was marked in the decades prior to the Civil War by exceptional capital concentration and corporate expansion, accelerating the shift from artisanship to routinized wage labor. Bearing witness to stunning growth alongside rampant poverty and residential segregation, German-American novelist Emil Klauprecht praised the city's common devotion to free labor principles, regardless of partisanship, class status, or place of origin.[1] By 1854, the publication date of Klauprecht's *Cincinnati: Oder Geheimnisse Des Westens* and the birth year of the Republican Party, the "free labor" moniker accurately described the entirety of the Lower Midwest. Party politics of that decade, especially in Klauprecht's southwestern Ohio, were characterized by a long-established Democratic majority fending off a Republican insurgency. Born out of political crisis over the future of slavery in U.S. territories, the nascent Republicans were a diverse coalition stringently

opposed to slavery and its extension. In the process, members sought to create a bourgeois democratic republic, thereby achieving a victory for wage over slave labor that Karl Marx saw as a necessary precondition for future working-class struggle.[2]

Standing in the way of that vision was what Republican leaders termed the "Slave Power"—a conspiring cabal of oligarchs whose undue influence within the federal government constituted a paramount threat to democracy and free laboring people. The party's free-soilism represented, in one sense, "a species of class politics" expressed through mass party electoralism rather than abolitionist-style appeals to morality and individual consciousness raising.[3] Party propaganda identified a "slaveholding monopoly" and cited the South's sizable population of "poor white trash" as confirmation that slavery's very presence destroyed liberty and opportunity. The solution, partisans contended, was to preserve as much national territory as possible for wage labor—with a racial twist. To the question "Which is the nigger party?," one editor responded that only the Republicans pledged racial untaintedness: "They say keep your niggers out."[4] In endorsing "free white labor" in the Border South, the *Chicago Tribune* predicted that continued reliance on slave labor, and concomitant "amalgamation," would result in the perpetuation of a "mulatto race" similar to the Moors and other "semi-African people." For most border Republicans, whiteness was both a marker of group purity—a way of avoiding "the fatal corruption of blood"—and a vehicle for economic opportunity.[5] Yet, as historian David Brody recognizes, "No major party ever so closely identified itself with the cause of labor as did the Republicans in their bid to become a mass party."[6] In fostering white identity to combat the slaveocracy, Republicans made appeals to small-scale owners, artisans, and wage earners, lumped together and qualified in both economic and racial terms as "free white labor."

Lower Midwesterners agreed on the preferability of racial exclusion, but deliberated constitutional intent and whether the framers saw the Northwest Ordinance as the national model. In one debate between two southern Illinois politicians, Democrat Orlando B. Ficklin claimed that the country was established with slavery to be determined by "the people" and Republican senator Lyman Trumbull argued that freedom, not bondage, which Washington and Jefferson recognized as an "evil," was meant to be the republican standard.[7] By the mid-1850s a growing free-soil minority in the Lower Midwest agreed with Preston King's insistence that not only did bondage "place free white labor upon a condition of social equality with the labor of the black slave," but slavery's absence in fact fostered abundance for laboring whites. History

supposedly provided the evidence. King maintained that, in preserving Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois for white men, the supreme wisdom of the Revolutionary generation facilitated the prosperity of "the Great West," whose wealth and industry had transpired with unprecedented speed. The economic marvels of Cincinnati and now Chicago were unsullied by "the evils of slavery and a black population."[8] King's statement was not true; the Midwest had been multiracial from its inception, with Europeans and Africans displacing Native peoples. The region became more diverse and more unequal in the early age of railroads, urbanization, and machine-based manufacturing. Though national Republicans, like abolitionists before them, verbalized a clear binary between "slavery" and "freedom," border people in both parties, and even across the color line, knew that no such perforation existed.

Free white labor comprised a political consensus, but borderlanders contested it and debated its particulars. Free Blacks, abolitionists, and many European-born radical republican *émigrés* rejected the prevailing view outright, eschewing both Democratic popular sovereignty, which condoned immorality simply because it was majoritarian, and conservative Republican sophistries regarding free labor for *white* men. Mainline Republicans and Democrats, meanwhile, were divided over the "nationalization" question and how best to preserve "Anglo-Saxon democracy," even as differences in partisan affiliation often belied coincident strategies and long-term voter goals.[9] Whereas slaveholders alleged that liberty rested on the opportunities that Black chattel labor afforded white men (what good was a ruling race without a subordinate race over which to rule?), Lower Midwestern Democrats overwhelmingly agreed with their Republican adversaries about the preferability of an all-white society. In other words, Democrats and conservative Republicans held similar notions of free labor but endorsed different strategies as how to best enact and protect it, with the former preferring popular sovereignty and a compact with proslavery nationalists and the latter opting for non-extensionism and alliance with antislavery reform. To that end, conflict over bondage highlighted within both parties the necessity of political accommodation. Just as most white Kentuckians understood the institutions as central to their commercial welfare and racial identities, the vast majority of Lower Midwesterners saw slavery's preservation across the Ohio River as the best means of protecting both their material conditions and racial identities, including the real and imagined social advantages those identities conferred. For these reasons, as Matthew Salafia argues, most antebellum border residents "never gave up on the idea of living half slave and half free."[10]

Upland southerners across the political spectrum nevertheless possessed deep commitments to what were, in effect, free-labor principles.[11] Alarmed by the accumulation of slaveholder power they had witnessed in the South, some embraced the Slave Power thesis and the Republican policies of cordoning off slavery and white homesteading in the West. Yet, in prioritizing the livelihoods of white yeomen, most uplanders valued the Democratic planks of a robust Fugitive Slave Law as to keep slavery's boundary intact and safeguard their own economic opportunities north of the Ohio River. Like urban wage earners, notably the Irish, many upland poor also understood the true expense of "free soil," as even federally-gifted freeholds required an influx of cash for travel, fees, seed, fencing, livestock, and implements. Orlando Ficklin, for example, believed Republican homestead proposals to be prejudiced against "the very poorest class."[12] Democrats built on these class-based arguments to paint their opponents as "abolition aristocrats" whose race mixing would "enslave" white labor. And because such debates were driven by intensely local factors, especially along slavery's border, citizens perceived the slavery question as also a regional question. Illinoisan Edward F. Bullard, for one, sensed that the free white labor in Little Egypt was predicated less on "free" land than on maintaining slavery in Kentucky and Missouri. An admirer of Stephen Douglas who nevertheless believed that "slavery must fall everywhere," Bullard recognized that disagreements about how that process should occur were both partisan and provincial. He explained in the fall of 1856 that "the northern part of this state is all one way and the south all the other." Predicting a showdown within the state over the issue, he concluded, "The battle is close."[13]

That battle also underscored regional cleavages within political parties. In Ohio, the *Athens Messenger* viewed intraparty rifts between conservative border Republicans and those in the Upper Midwest as "a struggle between the friends of *free white labor* and *black slave labor*," with party leaders Frank Blair and Thomas Corwin identified with the former.[14] Whereas Republicans in the North often infused the party brand with moral antislavery, their junior partners along the border frequently distilled free labor ideology to its racial-economic components. Frank Blair of Missouri described the clash between slaveholders and "free white labor" as part of a larger struggle of "capital against labor." He explained, "Slaveholders are another lot of capitalists, who wish to seize the Territories for themselves and negroes, and throw out the poor white men." It was slanderous, Blair maintained, that Democrats conflated the preservation of government lands for white people with abolitionism.[15] To Blair's point, historian Eric Foner identifies "distinct differences

between the politics of the upper and lower North" with regard to not only Democratic and Republican constituencies, with the former predominating in the Ohio Valley and the latter in the Great Lakes, but also division between upstate and downstate Republicans. Hostile to both moral reform and the slave aristocracy, what became the conservative Unionist politics of southern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois represented, according to one Republican, "a sort of belt or breakwater between the extremes of North and South."[16] Whereas Republicans farther north exhibited firmer moral opposition to slavery and a stronger desire to extinguish the slave system altogether (on some contested timeline), conservative Republicans along the border consisted of former antislavery Democrats, Know-Nothings, Old Line Whigs who saw the upstart party as best suited to ensure a racially homogenous society, rein in the Slave Power, and, eventually, preserve the Union.

As national slavery debates intensified, the Lower Midwest's adjacency to slavery—both the very presence of non-white people and their potential as economic competitors—became an all-consuming issue, intensifying the Democrats' proslavery drift during the late 1850s.[17] Meanwhile, national party opposition to the Fugitive Slave Law also meant that Lower Midwestern Republicans were especially susceptible to increased Democratic charges of "negro equality." Many responded by doubling down on white racial unity. Through expressions both personal and political, border Republicans grew adamant that, because they and not Democrats sought to preserve the western territories for free white settlers *only*, theirs was the true "white man's party," best able to protect the constitutional status quo and provide a racially uniform and economically impregnable society. Party leaders including Corwin, Thomas Ewing, and John McLean of Ohio, Richard W. Thompson, John D. Defrees, and Albert G. Porter of Indiana, and Orville H. Browning, David Davis, and Lyman Trumbull of Illinois emphasized the question of preventing slavery in the West rather than "curing" slavery in the South. Attempting to court downstate voters and defend the party against accusations of "nigger worship," the *Chicago Tribune* acknowledged that the essence of Republicanism sought to "protect the rights of the white race rather than redress the wrongs inflicted on the negro" and wanted "nothing to do with the question of abolishing slavery or bettering the condition of the slaves." While the policy of confining slavery to the South might lead eventually to its abolition, the editor made clear that the immediate Republican program of free homesteads, public schools, internal improvements, and protective tariffs centered entirely on self-determination for white men.[18] Even national

committee members acknowledged that the party motto of "Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men," principally a "vindication of the rights of labor," was racially qualified. They countered charges of "Black Republicanism" by endorsing the creation of "free, bright republics, constituted of the white race alone" that might "redeem their white brethren of the South."[19]

THIS FREE WHITE LABOR FANTASY remained predicated on Black removal. Colonization, or the movement to emancipate and relocate Black people outside the United States, combined white supremacy with imperialism and missionizing humanitarianism. Its backers claimed slavery was "hurtful to the morals and industry of whites" and incompatible with the long-term security of society due to the constant possibility of revolt.[20] Repatriation became a "middle way" to avoid both perpetual slavery and racial integration. As a conservative antislavery strategy, and a protection against Black migration, colonization had considerable bipartisan support in the Ohio Valley. Henry Clay, who slandered free people of color as a degraded "class" in addition to an alien race, had been a founding member of the American Colonization Society in 1816 and served as its president from 1836 to 1849.[21] Although challenged by Lane Seminary abolitionists, Cincinnati formed its own colonization society in 1826, one of dozens across Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, where Abraham Lincoln was a member.[22] Though radicals recognized its immorality, and moderates the impracticality of removing the bulk of the South's labor force, colonization, and its basic assurance that free whites would never have to compete in a marketplace with former slaves, jelled with regional practices of racial aversion.[23] Support for colonization increased during times of economic downturn and in direct proportion to surges in racial enmity, with exclusionists viewing excision as part of the same scheme, as both restriction and resettlement were, according to Indiana governor Joseph A. Wright, critical to "the great struggle for the separation of the black man from the white."[24] While rooted in social control, and often tied to concerns about resources and physical space, that "struggle" also included nonmaterial animosities and psychologies as anti-Black culture took on a life of its own. So, when later compelled to address the "free negro question," or what was to be done with former slaves if they were freed at some point in the distant future, most border Republicans, like their Whig antecedents, offered the old strategy of manumission and migration.[25] In the Lower Midwest, historian George M. Fredrickson notes, colonization regularly devolved into "a crude

deportationism aimed exclusively at the removal of free negroes."[26] In that sense, many Democrats advocated an all-white society through slavery's slow extinction alongside compensated emancipation and immediate deportation, and border Republicans largely shared those principles, albeit with a degree of pragmatism. As Foner argues, Black relocation was "the only way to convince southern non-slaveholders as well as northwestern racists to support eventual emancipation."[27]

For conservative Republicans, however, appeals to white solidarity were essential components—not unfortunate betrayals—of party strategy, intrinsic to their antislavery principles. The first Republican convention in Johnson County, Illinois, revealed these contours of racialized populism. Viewing themselves as the inheritors of Jefferson and Clay, committeemen vilified abolitionist "negro worshippers" and vehemently opposed the movement of Black people, enslaved or otherwise, into free states and federal territories. As such, Republicans professed to be "down on Douglas" and his popular sovereignty approach, which allowed for the possibility of race mixing, "like a darkey on a roast possum." Because white and Black people could never live peaceably under the same government, the committee also underwrote a mass resettlement plank: for Blacks, colonization abroad, and for whites, federally established 160-acre homesteads in the West.[28] Hopes for party growth among slaveless yet anti-Black border yeomen following the economic downturn of 1857 increasingly meant promoting tariffs and internal improvements as blows to the slaveholding oligarchy.[29] Responding to Democratic charges of racial equality, former Whigs and antislavery Democrats in southern Ohio and Indiana framed their new party's ambitions as aligned not with Yankee antislavery moralists, but with the economic nationalism and political moderation of their icon, Henry Clay. Border South Republicans, including Edward Bates and Cassius M. Clay, likewise saw racial nationalism as the only way to gain party support among non-slaveholding whites. Colonization and limits on immigration were a way to peaceably end slavery; they were also a means to preserve the purity of Anglo-Saxon "blood."[30]

White protectionists also targeted those outside the "African race." By the late 1850s both parties predicted that Chinese "coolies," who were ostensibly cheaper than chattel slaves and whose "physiognomies" were "suited to warm climates," might overtake both slave and free white labor.[31] Republicans, however, directed their nativism primarily toward the more immediate threat: "pauper labor" from Europe. In Evansville, which was nearly half German during the 1850s, and Cincinnati, some party stalwarts equated "Roman-

ism" with both proslavery politics and a "floating population" of "rowdies," imbued with animal-like traits.[32] Elite Cincinnatians cultivated a rhetoric of white republicanism to defuse rising class conflict and ethnic fragmentation, and the river bottom–dwelling Irish, who comprised 12 percent of the city's population by 1850, were particularly excluded from this vision of the white nation.[33] Protestants, as well as German Catholic professionals and artisans, characterized the Irish as a "savage race" of lazy, drunken, diseased, and violent criminals—stereotypes that whites across the class spectrum had long applied to free Blacks.[34] With the rise of the Know-Nothings, anti-Irish violence became common in both cities and rural areas where wage and spatial competition were less pronounced.[35] The anti-immigrant American Party flourished in Cincinnati, where nativist mobs attacked German-American neighborhoods in April 1855, as well as immigrant-heavy enclaves of southern Indiana including New Albany and Princeton. In turn, the "Black Irish," also demeaned as "niggers turned inside out" because the two groups occupied similar residential and work spaces, gradually "became white" by embracing white supremacy and redirecting the "Paddy" stereotypes aimed at them toward African American "competitors." As historian David Brody argues, "Immigrant workers, always at the receiving end of nativist hostility, now had in the black man a suitable target on whom to discharge their own rage."[36] Even Cincinnati's Home Rule faction, otherwise aligned with antislavery Irish nationalists abroad, believed that their livelihoods and the security of the republic depended on the retention of slavery across the Ohio River, a fact lamented by the Irish freedom fighter Daniel O'Connell. Propagandists would rework and expand anti-Irish tropes to depict other non-"white" immigrants—as well as entire working-class groups and communities—as social inferiors.[37]

If radicals were committed to civic equality for free Blacks and moderates most concerned with slavery as a condition rather than with race as a social barrier, antislavery conservatives were consistent proponents not merely of racial inequali*ty*, but of white man's democracy. As Fredrickson explains, the ideal of racial homogeneity originated with moderate antislavery reformers in the early republic, and "did not receive full articulation until it became an element in the nationalist thinking of many Republicans and free-soilers in the 1850s."[38] Imperial inflections of free labor saw no clear partition between economic and genetic factors. Believing it "unnatural" that any white man be in competition with or labor alongside Blacks, border Republicans typically agreed with Illinoisan Orville H. Browning and Albert G. Porter of Indiana

that there was no prospect of equality between whites and a "degraded race," and that slavery should be constricted lest Black labor, slave or otherwise, come into competition with free white workingmen.[39] Always quick to dash insinuations of "Seward niggerology," so named for New York's prominent antislavery senator, Ohio congressman Thomas Corwin espoused instead a "mighty Empire" based on strict racial restriction. Corwin maintained that the framers of the Northwest Ordinance had outlawed bondage north of the Ohio River precisely because they understood that the system was "not friendly to white men."[40] In other words, countless border Republicans endorsed not simply the party model of "freedom national," with wage labor as the country's standard, or what historian Graham A. Peck terms "antislavery nationalism," but a more accommodationist *western* standard of freedom that required greater political concessions to Democrats for the purposes of living and conducting business adjacent to slaveholders while preserving white demography in their own communities.[41] In time, such Republicans, who viewed slavery as singularly detrimental to western men "on the make," came to use "slavery" and "black labor" as interchangeable threats to white workers, ambiguous as to which represented the greater threat.[42] In a region where voters were overwhelmingly antislavery as well as anti-Black, such conflation, the convergence of racial and economic threats, was the very point.

The threat of Slave Power nevertheless dominated the Republican imagination. The slaveholding "aristocracy" constituted an undemocratic concentration of wealth and influence premised on labor that was not only unfree, but also a violation of white paragon—the slaver's oligarchy and race mixing went hand-in-hand. Referencing proslavery filibustering in Latin America, Republican editors argued that while Democrats would "give three hundred millions of dollars for Cuba, for the nigger-loving white man," they would do nothing for "the landless, free labor white man."[43] The flaw in the Democrats' vision, as many of their opponents saw it, was neither in empire nor white supremacy; white men of both parties might agree on those terms. Rather, the defect lay in its elitism *through* the propagation of an "unnatural"—if white dominant—interracial society. As such, Republicans turned the "Black" epithet back on its Democratic authors by casting them as a "Black Democracy," operating in the interests of a slaveholding elite, and targeting poor Democrats by drawing explicit connections between "African" (Democratic) voting and illiteracy.[44] Defensive Republicans also avowed that miscegenation was most common in the Democratic South; that Black voting had passed in Maine, Massachusetts, and New York during Democratic administrations; and that

Democrats were opposed to an entirely white dominion in the West so that "capital should own labor."[45]

The notion that Black slavery infringed upon white labor was part of a solidifying Republican critique against Democratic elitism. A champion of free homesteads and future co-author of the Thirteenth Amendment, Lyman Trumbull of Alton, Illinois, became a spokesman for a brand of Republican populism that cast Democrats as the party of speculation and non-producing capital, embodied by the planter class. In the fall of 1859, he reminded an Ohio audience that only one in sixty white men owned a slave, and even in the South that ratio stood at roughly one in twenty. This slaver minoritarianism represented both political and economic tyranny to common whites, who neither owned bondsmen nor the plantations that demanded outsized tracts of land. An antislavery nationalist, Trumbull alleged that popular sovereignty was, in fact, a smoke screen for planter hegemony. "By what stretch of patriotic fancy . . . shall that legislation which disregards the interests of fifty-nine for the sole benefit of the sixtieth man, be transfigured into popular sovereignty?," one editor paraphrased. "Would the wishes of 350,000 capitalists of the Northern cities of New York, Philadelphia and Cincinnati receive such consideration?"[46] Though Douglas's Democracy appealed to the material realities of small farmers and wage earners, Trumbull warned that the party was surreptitiously "building up a class and creating an aristocracy" of race-mixing oligarchs, eager to monopolize western lands that should be reserved for free men.[47]

However, Trumbull's critiques of both slaveholder and capitalist power were not without racial qualifiers. Like most of his constituents, Trumbull was zealous in his anti-integration bona fides, assuring downstate voters that the ultimate Republican objective was to remove every Black person from the North American continent.[48] He also situated his belief in white superiority in a regional context. Speaking at Lucas Square in St. Louis in July 1860, Trumbull proclaimed that Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois were founded on free soil principles, yet he beseeched the "Anglo-Saxon race," highlighting the dependence of St. Louis industry on southern Illinois coal as bonds of free white labor across the Mississippi River.[49] Trumbull was also quick to reiterate that opposition to slavery did not entail any semblance of racial equality. Rebuffing Buchananite claims of "nigger worship," he made his position clear: "I want to have nothing to do with either the free negro or the slave negro. We, the Republican Party, are the white man's party. We are for free white men, and for making white labor respectable and honorable." Trumbull, who

would become a Liberal Republican in 1872 and, later, a Populist, foresaw colonization as the only viable long-term alternative to either gradual emancipation, which would unleash a wave of Black competitors, or an oligopoly of slaveholders, certain to crush small-scale proprietors.[50]

Democrats, meanwhile, charged opponents with possessing a secret "Congo Creed" of emancipation and racial equality that would prompt a northward diaspora of cut-rate competitors, destroying both white society and the free labor system. Ohio Democrats emphasized the importance of securing slavery's border so as not to "*degrade* the free labor or free men" while also making their state entirely—even violently—inhospitable to free Blacks. They alleged that if Ohio continued to serve as a "stomping ground for the runaway and manumitted slaves of the South," Black workers would increasingly "come in competition with the labor of the white man." Racial integration represented a race to the bottom with regard to wage standards; banishment and exclusion were the only defenses. "Our population must have work or starve," one editor reminded readers, and the best way to protect white work was to "shut out the free negro."[51] Democrat Orlando Ficklin of Illinois maintained that the critical issue was not simply that Lower Midwestern whites did not desire to live among free Blacks; it was also that Blacks were intrinsically incapable of freedom. He argued that the absence of bondage made Blacks "vicious and idle," and that the Black enclaves he had witnessed in Edwards, Lawrence, and Coles counties were innately violent and destitute. As a "lazy and indolent class of people," free Blacks had to be "made to work," and were incompatible with a masterless labor order.[52]

Accordingly, Democrats argued that the best method of preserving white livelihoods was to maintain firm control of enslaved Blacks and seal off every possible opening to emancipation, no matter how gradual. Republican opposition to the Fugitive Slave Act, for example, had the potential of turning the Ohio River into an international border and transforming the Lower Midwest into a slave refuge like Canada. The result would be, as one Ohioan put it, a society "overrun with escaped negroes, whose labor would at once have been put in competition with that of *poor free white men*," thus driving them from the state.[53] In Illinois, Democrats printed stories of interracial Republican parades in New England as evidence that the party's "amalgamating" element, once planted, would spread and overtake the free white institutions of the West.[54] In fact, many Douglas partisans avowed that there was no practical difference between conservative antislavery and abolition, as the end result of each would have the potential of unleashing torrents of mobile and destitute

Black people. If the colonization or racial exclusion components of conservative antislavery failed to materialize or proved impossible to enforce, liberated slaves would then, according to the *Indiana Sentinel*, emigrate to the lower free states and "work side by side with poor laboring white men," driving down wages because former slaves would be willing to "receive their pay in old clothes."[55] James L. D. Morrison, reportedly the wealthiest man in St. Clair County, spoke directly to working-class fears along the border:

> You free white men, you Americans, you day laborers, I know that Republicanism tells you that it seeks to elevate the white man. And how? "By striking the fetters of slavery from the limb of the manacled slave." Ah, is that the way to elevate the character of the white man? Is that the way to elevate the free laborer of the city of St. Louis?—To set one hundred thousand slaves of Missouri free—To let them pour into the city of St. Louis, and those of them that have energy enough, and character enough, and will enough to be worth anything as free negroes; to set them in competition with you at your working-benches, at your forges, on drays, in workshops. Is that the way to elevate the character of the white man?[56]

It was a compelling argument—one that appealed to both prejudices and pocketbooks. And in championing themselves as the caucus of both bread and butter and racial purity, many conservative Republicans defied the party standard of "freedom national, slavery sectional." As late as 1858, the Indiana Republican Party endorsed popular sovereignty and several prominent border Republicans backed Douglas's reelection campaign against Lincoln.[57] Rather than calling for slavery's restriction, many key conservatives demanded merely the restoration of the Missouri Compromise. Some, including Thomas Corwin, fought against nullification of the Fugitive Slave Law. In fact, they called for its strengthening because they feared the alternative would lead to race mixing, social backlash, and political fallout.[58] Corwin, more than any other statesman, embodied the conservatism of Ohio Valley Republicanism. A reluctant John C. Frémont supporter in 1856 who rallied disgruntled Democrats and former moderate Whigs to the emerging coalition, the Ohioan was best known for authoring his namesake amendment, which was intended to forestall civil war by offering ironclad constitutional protection for slavery everywhere it presently existed.[59] Corwin's vaguely class-based arguments against planters also underscored a discrete understanding of how proximity to slavery impacted racialization in the region. Opposing "ultra

fanatics" North and South, Corwin argued that while any additional territorial expansion would ideally be suited to white labor and free of slavery, it *must* be conducive to "the white race . . . *our* white race."[60] That preservation of white authority necessitated racial control through either enslavement or strict separation, with the latter often depending on the former. While not confident that slaveholders in Congress would uphold an extended Missouri Compromise line, Corwin stressed the arbitrariness of popular sovereignty and praised the effectiveness of congressionally established racial boundaries: "What is black on one side of the line is white on the other."[61]

Belief in racial difference also epitomized antislavery activism. Even white reformers invoked a "romantic racialism" that legitimized the ascendent field of race science, in which theorists used biology, anthropometry, and craniometry to categorize human populations into racial "types" or "stocks" in order to justify particular social hierarchies. In Cincinnati, for instance, arguments by antislavery whites ranging from educator Alexander Kinmont to author Harriet Beecher Stowe maintained that a Black "nation" was "naturally" Christian, feminine, "tenderminded," or otherwise biologically distinct. Stowe's notion of racial nationhood, or "African nationality," suggested the existence of a separate and immutable white nation, lending credence to the schemes of prominent "scientific" racial exclusionists such as Ohioan Dr. Daniel Drake. Similarly, these convictions implied that people, Black and white, also possessed their own inborn features *both against other racial groups and within their own racial group*—"white trash," "degraded whites," etc. Such logic fed colonizationist assumptions concerning the "natural" habitats and climatic zones of respective "races," fueling exclusionary impulses into and beyond the Civil War era; it also promoted a worldview in which the ostensibly fixed conditions of distinct and typically antagonistic "races" superseded all other forms of social organization, including according to class.[62]

Despite the counternarratives of abolitionists, free Blacks, and antislavery workingmen's movements, racist illustrations pervaded popular culture. Worried about abolitionist agitation on the "borders of bondage," Henry Field James caricatured free Blacks and antislavery Midwesterners in his popular proslavery travelogue, *Abolitionism Unveiled!*, published in Cincinnati in 1856. Yet his polemic, in which a pair of Kentuckians traveling the North encounter the antislavery "conspiracy" firsthand, also described what the Indiana residents in his story view as the superiority of white free labor. Although James maintained that southern climates and labor conditions were incompatible with the physical constitution of the "white race," even the demonized Hoo-

siers in his proslavery daydream insisted that the South would be both more democratic and more productive if it were not only free of slave labor, but free of *all* Black people.[63]

The growth of the Republican Party and its antislavery agenda accelerated "replacement" hysterics across the borderland. In 1856, newspapermen in Cairo warned that the city was "almost entirely overrun with niggers" (despite a Black population of only thirty). In nearby Mound City, editors reported that the alternative to Black removal was the "eminent danger" of a "race war," including white property "at the mercy of an ignorant and merciless set of barbarous negroes."[64] To exclusionists across party lines, the Dred Scott decision and John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry constituted victories for the forces of amalgamation. With few exceptions, including an interracial workingmen's parade through Cincinnati led by German communist August Willich and Black abolitionist Peter H. Clark, a regional consensus denounced Brown's attempted slave revolt as treasonous insurrection.[65] While Democrats blamed the "Black Republican army" and Republicans censured the abolitionist minority in their own party, both held that any sudden disruption of the slave system would lead Black migrants northward and disrupt the region's labor supply.[66]

But as Dred Scott's case revealed, many Lower Midwesterners across both parties saw constitutional changes related to slavery as equally threatening. In contrast to the Democratic outcry of "negro invasion," Republicans alleged that the Court's ruling, orchestrated by and for the benefit of the Slave Power, would open the door not merely to slavery in the Midwest, but "white slavery." Unchecked slaveholder mobility would naturally result in confusion about where slavery could and could not exist, as well as who could and could not be a slave. According to the *Cincinnati Gazette*, this blurring of the social and legal distinctions between Black and white meant that "slavery is not to be confined to the NEGRO RACE, but must be made to include *laboring* WHITE MEN also."[67] Slavery anywhere, even when legally limited to racial inferiors, had the capacity to also subjugate free white men. This was a powerful idea that spoke to the direct material interests of white workers and intimated that "race management" was a form of class control.[68] But, for many Republicans, the matters of who did and did not constitute "free white men" and which white men needed or remained beyond salvation, demanded a strong consideration of political geography. It was a question of who hailed from the South, who resided near slavery's borders, and who had been "polluted"—either socially or biologically—by the Slave Power.

FREE LABOR IDEOLOGY BIRTHED A new vocabulary to describe the poor population of white people who resided outside the planation system. Popularized by antislavery newspaper editors, travel essayists, novelists, and social commentators during the 1850s, "white trash" was, like "crackers," "sandhillers," and "dirt eaters," meant to convey slavery's degrading effects on non-slaveholding members of the ruling race. Most of the disseminators initially used "poor whites" or "mean whites" to describe the South's propertyless white populations who, unable to compete with the cost savings of slave labor, were cut off from economic mobility. Yet the more punitive "trash," with its implied racial impurity and threat of contamination, grew increasingly common near the end of the decade.[69] Travelogue writers including James Sterling and Frederick Law Olmsted used the phrase. So did Frederick Douglass, whose 1857 autobiography *My Bondage and My Freedom* referenced the South's "poor white trash" as the laughingstock of both elite whites and enslaved Blacks.[70] North Carolina abolitionist Hinton Rowan Helper estimated that there were millions of non-slaveholding whites "made poor and ignorant" by the slave system, and these "second degree slaves" were often "infinitely worse off" than bondsmen.[71] Other treatments were less forgiving. John Cairnes, whose musings on the Slave Power charged poor whites with being equal parts vice-ridden and "savage" (a term with inescapable racial connotations), argued that the region's non-slaveholders were both critical supporters and victims of the peculiar institution.[72] Even so, antislavery authors often presented the term in quotes or italics to indicate disagreement with the characterization or convey its controversial nature. Blaming white destitution not on the degrading effects of slavery, but on an innately defective "white trash" culture, southern elites did not share the ambivalence of their antislavery counterparts.

It soon became evident, however, that the "trash" caused by the "pollution" of slavery was not confined to the South, as upland southerners escaped the political boundaries of slavery yet allegedly transplanted the system's debauchedness onto free soil. Traveling the Ohio Valley in the 1820s, James Hall had noted that the phrase "poor white" indicated "the most sovereign contempt," especially when spoken by Black people.[73] Now critics increasingly transformed "poor white" into the more astringent "white trash." Prefiguring Social Darwinist notions of an elemental struggle between "races" of people, George M. Weston remarked with alarm in his 1856 sociological study, *The Poor Whites of the South*, that there were over 100,000 slave state migrants in Illinois and Indiana alone. "It is unquestionable," he stated, "that the immi-

gration from the South has brought into the free states more ignorance, poverty, and thriftlessness, than an equal amount of immigration from Europe." Adding, "Where it forms a marked feature of the population, as in Southern Illinois, a long time must elapse before it is brought up to the general standard of intelligence and enterprise in the free State."[74] Slavery's defenders, too, including the Alabama-born Illinoisan Daniel R. Hundley, reminded northern readers that ragged paupers "are also found in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Indiana, and all the States of the North-West," though he admitted that "in most of these cases they came originally from the South."[75] In the context of free white labor, it was nearly impossible to discern between the contamination of a labor system and the white race itself.

The Republican Party provided an opening for methodical cultural appraisals of the Lower Midwest. Free labor ideology became, according to Eric Foner, "a yardstick for judging other social systems," as Republicans measured free state economic development, social mobility, and political democracy against that of the slaveholding South. The results—the metrical bases of what Foner terms the "Republican critique of the South"—presented a more literate, egalitarian, and commercially dynamic North against a socially fixed and aristocratic South. Empirical outcomes validated the Republican program of public investment in education, infrastructure, and manufacturing, as western settlement free of slavery so that (presumably white) small farmers might acquire and improve federally allotted homesteads, with U.S. claims upheld by the removal or attempted extermination of Native people. Free soil proponents such as Horace Greeley, William Seward, and Cassius Clay painted a particularly bleak portrait of propertyless whites living on the margins of the plantation empire. Republican newspapers including the *New York Tribune* and the *Cincinnati Gazette* devoted entire series to the theme of southern underdevelopment. Both described the hills, swamps, and river bottoms of the poor white South as places of non-arable land, dilapidated housing, and ambiguous personal property distinctions complicated by squatting and a lack of proper fencing. Slavery "polluted" not only social and political ecologies, but also the habits of non-slaveholding whites who resided in its midst.[76]

By the late 1850s, slavery's opponents began to apply the Republican "yardstick" to the South's migratory extensions and cultural hinterlands in the lower free states. Southern Illinois became a conspicuous target as national Republicans associated "Egyptian darkness" with the influence of slavery on upland populations and the region's paucity of free labor insti-

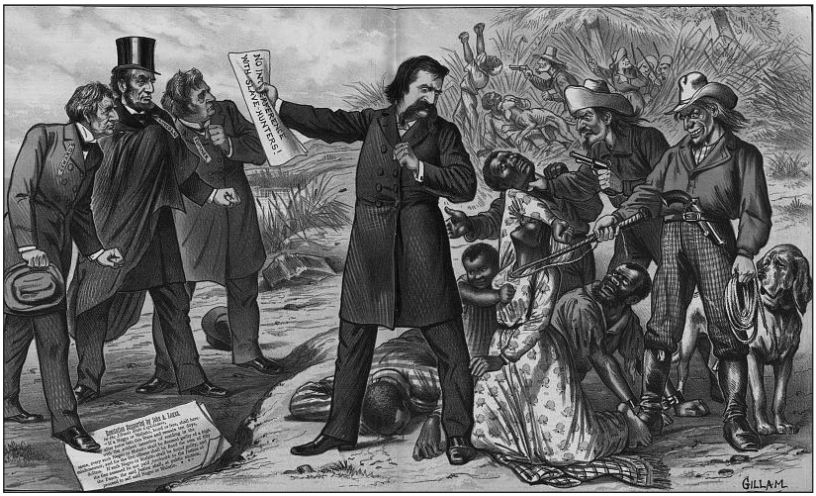
tutions.[77] Connecting region-specific themes to popular understandings of "white trash," many viewed the South's northern-bound poor—those too broke to own slaves, circumscribed by slave labor, and whose aspirations for land were impeded by planters—as the unwanted discharge of the slave system. The supposed slowness (or inability) of such migrants to break with subsistence farming and embrace a market economy augmented Republican prejudices, as well as partisan assumptions. In contrast to the "intelligent and educated" (majority Republican) districts of New England and the Great Lakes, Little Egyptians lived "a mere animal existence" *because* they favored the Democratic ticket.[78] While Democratic outlets including the *Cincinnati Enquirer* defended "dark Egypt" by publishing county illiteracy tallies and claiming that Republican-leaning parts of central Indiana were the *true* sites of intellectual rot, Republican newspapers alleged that there was a causal relationship between Democratic politics and illiteracy.[79] The *Cincinnati Times*, for one, published literacy figures from Illinois's 9th Congressional District in order to "prove" the "effects of ignorance" on the region's politics and frame its poverty as self-inflicted.[80] Betraying how ethnic and regional prejudices gave cover to partisan cleavages and divergent class interests, Republicans outside the region compared southern Illinois to New York City's Five Points community, deeming both rural Egyptians and the urban Irish—whose ostracism was compounded by being Democratic, Catholic, and poor—antithetical to enlightened progress. However, unlike illiterate adults in other parts of the free states whose lack of learning and "productive industry" could be blamed on foreign birth and a lack of linguistic assimilation, "poor whites" in southern Illinois skewed native born and therefore had less excuse for their backwardness.[81] Missionizing reformers expressed paternalistic concern for the southern-born poor whites who had fled "the blighting curse of slavery" yet remained ostensibly shackled by their innate crudeness and lack of enterprise.[82]

The leading crusader against Democratic politics and downstate "culture" was the *Chicago Tribune*. Through a cosmopolitan gaze, its editors maintained that Egypt was a place of "ignorance, superstition, and moral degeneracy," insisting that future emigration to the state should comprise "men of the right stamp" befitting of a free state.[83] When proslavery politicians asserted that the South's poor populations were freer than northern "wage slaves," Republicans shot back that not only had slavery created a nominally "free" but uniquely pauperized class of poor whites in the South, but the remnants of that class had infiltrated and polluted the free labor North. "You only have

to look at "Egypt," the *Tribune* explained, "where you will find thousands of those niggerless whites of the South, clad in butternut jeans, who can neither read nor write—chewing dog leg tobacco, guzzling rifle whiskey, and swearing at the 'Abolitionists.'" There were "traces enough of the debasing, crushing influences of the institution of slavery among which [Egyptians] were reared" to create a "malarious atmosphere" in southern Illinois.[84] Another paper explained that Egypt's "darkened population" had "fled from the blighted curse of slavery themselves, but brought with them the ignorance and prejudices entailed upon them by it."[85] The residue of slavery had produced an ignorant, dirty, and in some cases barely human population throughout large swaths of the lower free states, or so went Republican logic.

The desire among Lower Midwesterners to maintain slavery's borders led to broad support for the Fugitive Slave Act, which in turn fueled regional stereotyping. Unlike states in the Upper Midwest, neither Indiana nor Illinois passed personal liberty laws. In fact, by barring Black migration, state governments gave unofficial approval to the forced return of runaway slaves. The result was a "reverse Underground Railroad" north of the Ohio River that operated parallel to secret antislavery networks, with local whites capturing and returning escaped people into slavery. Using the force of the law and the "right to property" as pretext, slave trackers invaded homes to seize suspected runaways, often shanghaiing free Blacks in the process.[86] Traveling the region in the 1850s, businessman John Kirk of Youngstown, Ohio, encountered a people he deemed neither southern nor fully northern. Kirk characterized the local populace as "manstealers" and suggested that "the southern part of Illinois," where politicians were still loyal to the Unionist but southern-flavored politics of Andrew Jackson, embodied the region's most despicable characteristics.[87] The *Chicago Tribune*, which branded southern Illinois a "hunting ground of the runaway negro," noted the eagerness of citizens to comply with fugitive laws, singling out popular congressman John A. Logan as a "human bloodhound."[88] (See Figure 1.) Upstate Republicans charged that runaway chasing was Egypt's most industrious pastime, as the region's poverty stemmed from unproductivity elsewhere: the supposed idleness of its residents, their unwillingness to adopt technology, and their failure to utilize modern farming methods.[89] Meanwhile, southern Illinoisans complained that eastern newspapers "never mention us without affixing 'darkness' and holding us up to the world as a set of barbarians."[90]

Having cultivated the idea of Egyptian primitivism, far-off media outlets blamed residents for political dilemmas related to rising sectionalism. In his



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Figure 1. "John A. Logan in 1859," *Puck Magazine*, 1884. Depicted here defending antebellum "slave-hunters" inimical to Abraham Lincoln, William H. Seward, and Charles Sumner, Logan was a staunch Jacksonian and zealous supporter of the Fugitive Slave Law who underwent a wartime conversion to Republicanism.

study of Appalachian migrants in Detroit, anthropologist John Hartigan Jr. explains how white elites used monikers such as "hillbilly" to describe fellow whites who failed to adopt respectability norms. Southern-born migrants who shared cultural traits (speech, diet, lifestyle) with African Americans were scapegoated as "trash."[91] In the antebellum Midwest, this trend saw politicians and editors deride southern Illinoisans as "an entirely different race": barbaric, animalistic, and imbued with "heathenish darkness." Newspapers mocked and masculinized the region's women as "bare-footed angels" who possessed an almost "natural" affinity for filth and the "male" habits of drinking and tobacco.[92] As Hartigan posits, intra-racial epithets inscribe "a charged form of difference marked off from the privileges and powers of whiteness," thus demarcating "an inside and an outside to mainstream white society."[93] Proximity to slavery and premiums placed on being "not Black" surely intensified the phenomena of both poor whites asserting their white identities and affluent whites employing intra-racial othering to separate themselves from the poorer members of their own race. White poverty offered its own "proof" of the morality of the class system and widening inequality; the relative density of that poverty also precipitated new ways for better-off whites to explain how their supposedly uncultivated neighbors, though not Black, were also not their social or biological equals. Whether this white-on-white stereotyping

constituted a form of racial discrimination is open to question. In either case, swaths of people of European ancestry were regarded as not fully white—and were at times precluded from the full social benefits of whiteness—owing to, in effect, their class status.[94]

Such ideas permeated the nation's most widely circulated newspapers. In New York, racial exclusion laws and anti-Black violence in the Lower Midwest led abolitionist and *New York Tribune* editor Horace Greeley to wonder, "Is negro-hate an Anglo-Saxon instinct?" He cited southern Illinois as a site where these "instincts" were on full display. "In Northern Illinois, the great majority vote for a cherished principle—Equal Justice and Equal Rights for all," Greeley insisted. However, "in the Southern Counties, they vote against a despised and degraded caste." Analogizing Little Egypt's "slave state peoples" and the Five Points neighborhood of impoverished Irish immigrants, Greeley castigated the region's "poor whites," who he deemed "neither honest, nor sober, nor intelligent, nor thrifty, nor respected."[95] Skirting questions of social class as they related to political power, Greeley's assessment and others like it ignored the role of influence in the construction of white supremacist ideas; they likewise failed to consider how "poor whites" were represented within the region's politically engaged citizenry.[96] Nevertheless, Greeley's circular logic was commonplace in antislavery arguments concerning the so-called irredeemability of uplanders. Such reasoning held that slavery's effects rendered white migrants poor and depraved; depravity made them negrophobic; and negrophobia made them deserving of their material condition.

Some Lower Midwesterners agreed with aspects of the Republican critique, especially in the service of partisanship. Writing to the editor of the *National Era* about chicanery within the local "Black Democracy," and complaining that Republicans refused to send campaigners to the southern part of the state, one resident of Columbus, Indiana, determined that his political opponents were also class and racial enemies. "In this part of Indiana," he explained, "we are cursed with the low white trash that the slave states vomited into the free—things with human forms, but with not the first spark of manhood, intellect, or conscience, or anything that makes a man."[97] Other critics noted regional inequalities without allusions to bestialization. Editors in Shawneetown, on the Ohio River, fretted about widespread illiteracy but did not pathologize its citizens or blame so-called genetic or innate cultural factors. Rather, newspapermen confirmed that "the ignorance of our people" owed to the fact that Egypt was "twenty years behind the improvements of the age," due largely to the absence of free schools.[98] Many citizens recognized the

lack of print material in their communities and even identified advantages to "turning Yankee." Borderlanders were more likely to view the cultural differences between the Great Lakes and the Ohio Valley as related to—if not direct outgrowths of—poverty, rather than biology or cultural deficiency.[99] Nevertheless, party politics continuously amplified how political cleavages overlapped with cultural dissimilarities, from questions of religion, town planning, and diet to attitudes toward education and moral reform.[100] Such discussions were often soaked in class assumptions and regional biases operating under the cover of "science." Seeking to understand why the Ohio Valley was staunchly Democratic, one Republican paper in Indiana pointed to identifiable and inborn defects:

> Northern Indiana and Northern Illinois are peopled from the free states by an active, industrious, enterprising and intelligenct population, and these portions of both states give large Republican majorities. The southern portion of both of these states are peopled by the Slave states, by what is termed in the South "poor white trash"—a slow, lazy, thriftless, and ignorant population, and these portions give such heavy [Democratic] majorities as to control the politics of both states.[101]

Yet, these wretched Egyptians were not, in the eyes of most detractors, beyond political salvation. Hoping to bolster their ranks throughout Illinois, where in 1856 Frémont did not win a single county south of the National Road, national Republicans endorsed the establishment of party clubs. In Perry County, the Tamaroa Republican Club, with its motto "Free Territory for White Men," packaged the party program of freedom national to voters who were receptive—indeed, often deeply committed—to basic free labor values but eschewed any hint of slave emancipation devoid of legal exclusion or federally sponsored colonization. Hoping to assuage such misgivings, and predicting a much larger party turnout in 1860, one Tamaroa member urged locals not to conflate southern Illinois Republicans with abolitionists and "nigger equality men."[102] Through racialized populism, these Republicans believed that their party could most effectively shield white labor by preserving slavery where it existed *while also* checking slaveholder power and securing western lands for white men. This, in effect, was border Republicanism: a project to promote small-scale proprietorship by securing wage labor in the West and white racial solidarity at home through anti-sectional appeals to the "western" values of expansionism and anti-elitism.

Indeed, most Republicans were hopeful that public investment in education and infrastructure might bring "light" to a brutish people in an aberrative region. Historian Eric Michael Burke argues that Little Egypt loomed large in the Republican imagination, with party strategists viewing it as a potential "experimental laboratory" for free labor ideas. This "Republicanization," or the efforts to "deliver" Egypt and reshape the region along party principles, offered a template for later efforts to "reconstruct" the defeated South into a free labor economy.[103] The basis of Republican-driven "reformation" in Egypt centered on undoing the Lower Midwest's "wall of barbarism," which was the first step in revolutionizing the South itself.[104] Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune* predicted that railroads, telegraphs, schools, and newspapers would "surely transform and renovate 'Egypt' in the course of a few years."[105] Politically, regeneration might then turn poor Jacksonian areas, the "cesspools" of a "low region," into Republican strongholds.[106] Proclaiming the Ohio River counties a "Gibraltar of Democratic ignorance," the *Cleveland Leader* self-servingly concluded that the backwardness of the people could only be overturned by the establishment and promotion of antislavery newspapers.[107] Though southern Illinois was, according to one observer, "long shunned by capital and education, so given over to ignorance and wickedness," modern transportation and agricultural mechanization—industrial capitalism, in effect—represented not simply good business, but a "moral power."[108]

By 1860 southern Illinois served as a full-on negative reference point against which Republicans projected their sectional fears, as well as their class proclivities. But it was also increasingly acknowledged as a reform project, the potential host for numerous partisan aspirations. A Chicago editor celebrated that while southern Illinois had once been a locale of "ignorance, superstition, and moral degeneracy," its values were fast improving through the emigration of "men of the right stamp" into the region.[109] These "right men" who held the potential to transform Egypt's innate stuntedness were, of course, non-southerners. But they were also settlers of a particular status and persuasion: forward-looking businessmen, petty proprietors, and small-scale capitalists who were more receptive to antislavery politics and comprised the backbone of the nascent Republican Party. National support for "Republicanization"—the remaking of downstate culture and institutions along a more racially liberal free-labor (capitalist) model—waned with civil war and as the state's political power continued to shift northward, marginalizing the river counties. Yet, as late as 1870, the *Tribune* reminded readers

that while southern Illinois had always had "dark, benighted, Bourbon 'spots' where brutal prejudice against the colored citizens is intensified by dense ignorance," like the spots of the sun, Egypt's "spots" did not circumscribe its overall radiance or political potential.[110]

As political schism lurched the nation toward constitutional crisis and war, both parties claimed the mantle of free white labor leading up to the election of 1860.[111] Democratic exploitation of economic depression in 1857 never dissipated and party leadership continued to underscore the impact of "undulated niggerism" and non-white "competition."[112] With the Lower Midwest set to tip the electoral balance, border Republicans hoped to disrupt the longstanding white Democratic bloc through their own manner of populism. Proclaiming that Democrats were "crowding out white men," pro-Lincoln parade banners and newspaper mastheads read "Down with Slavery Extension! Up with the White Man and His Labor!" and "WE ARE FOR LAND FOR THE LANDLESS, NOT NIGGERS FOR THE NIGGERLESS!"[113] In Tiffin, Ohio, Lincoln men contended that their party's "grand prime object" was to "elevate the white race" and "preserve our Western domain for free homes for free men," as upholding an all-white society was the optimal means of opposing the Democrats' "aristocratic task-masters."[114] The *Cincinnati Commercial* likewise assured readers that Republicans were "emphatically and truly the party of the white man" as they looked to "save every foot of territorial soil" for the superior race. Defending the party against Democratic charges of "negrophilia," the editor insisted that the free soil policy of racial purity in the West was necessary to protect the "white industrial classes" who would be driven even further down the socioeconomic rungs.[115] In sum, Republicans were not a "black party," or purveyors of a slaveless underclass. Rather, they were "the real party for *White* men"—one in which each small farmer and wage earner would not have to "be his own nigger" by competing with slave labor.[116]

The free white labor ethos emanating out of the borderland was hardly incompatible with—and was indeed often made to conform to—global currents of liberal nationalism. This was evident, for instance, in late summer 1860 when émigré Carl Schurz stumped in southern Indiana. Exiled from his Prussian homeland following the 1848 revolutions, Schurz found asylum in Wisconsin, where he campaigned for Lincoln in his famed Senate race. Though Douglas won the election, Schurz's efforts helped raise Lincoln's profile among German voters. Two years later, Schurz's activism against the Slave Power brought him to the land of Lincoln's boyhood, in the rolling hills and

riverways of the Ohio Valley. Spreading the anti-aristocratic gospel of his fellow Forty-Eighters, he crisscrossed the region that August and September, alternating between English- and German-language speeches at Terre Haute, Vincennes, Tell City, Corydon, Seymour, New Albany, Columbus, and Mt. Vernon.[117] Schurz was accompanied at times by brass bands and glee clubs, as well as various groups of young and energetic pro-Lincoln militants, both youthful, torch-carrying Wide Awakes and members of the German-American Turnverein. On August 17 Schurz arrived at Evansville, a burgeoning commercial metropolis of over 11,000 people, and perhaps the most ethnically German city in the United States.

Evansville's immigrant community was stirred by the arrival of a fellow countryman and a comrade in arms. Trumpeting their guest as the most anticipated speaker to grace the city in ages, Republicans celebrated Schurz's political legacy, and local merchants sold cheap portraits of the romantic revolutionary to eager customers. Speaking at Mozart Hall, a German-established public auditorium, Schurz championed free labor while disavowing nativism within his party and attacking the popular sovereignty platform of Lincoln's opponent. In the end, local partisans deemed Schurz's swing a massive success, with one editor proclaiming they had "never witnessed so complete an extinguishment of a political adversary."[118] They likewise predicted a rush of German voters out of the Democratic camp, and Lincoln's victory in Vanderburgh County that November realized the prophecy. However, and perhaps understandably, Evansville Republicans also transformed Schurz's universal free labor message into a narrow and familiar racialized populism, modified to meet specific labor conditions in a region certain to be "overrun by negroes" if slavery was "not confined to its present locality."[119] There was, after all, a self-evident logic to the idea that if wage labor represented "natural" liberty, then the social hierarchies that wage capitalism produced must also be justified as inherent. With this in mind, the *Daily Journal* described Schurz not as an advocate of free labor *per se*, but as aligned with border voters in his devotion to "the interests of *free white* men."[120]

But what precisely constituted the interests of "free white men" remained unsettled, and borderlanders who went to the polls in the fall of 1860 quarreled over how best to protect white voters in the context of westward expansion. By and large, Lower Midwesterners across political parties interpreted "free white labor" to mean whatever best secured the racial and economic fabric of their own communities. To Douglas Democrats, as well as pockets of John Bell compromisers and John Breckinridge fire-eaters, the respective

Constitutional Union and Southern Democrat candidates, the Republican concept of freedom national represented too great a political deviation—one bound to produce radical social implications. They convinced voters that, even alongside racial exclusion and Black colonization, "Black Republican" policies represented the first step toward "Negro equality." The risk that the Republican left wing of reformers, abolitionists, and European-style red republicans might gain in influence, or that moderates like Lincoln were actually "amalgamationists" in disguise, was simply too great.

Lincoln men, meanwhile, saw the implantation of slavery in the West through either popular sovereignty or a national slave law that was antithetical to the free labor vision. For others, who were willing to chance that most would-be settlers in the West opposed slavery with equal fervency, freedom national may have been their preference, but it was not necessarily their strategy. Blaming slaveholder rashness and penchant for revolt on their prolonged exposure to "niggerism" and "the ragged pomp of Hayti," a faction of Cincinnati Republicans sanctioned the peaceable separation of the Union.[121] As outlined in the 1860 Vanderburgh County Republican Convention, Lincoln supporters in Evansville vowed to enforce the Fugitive Slave Law, endorsed the Democratic position of popular sovereignty, and supported a constitutional amendment to protect slavery in the South for all time.[122]

Jockeying for the mantle of free white labor revealed border Republicans' willingness to adopt key planks of the Democratic platform—including making slavery a permanent national feature—not only because they believed those stances to be in their interests, or even simply to avert war. They did so because they understood that all other conceivable positions and outcomes—Democratic acquiescence to slaveholders, a rising reform impulse within their own party and, above all, the potential for civil war along slavery's border—were more likely to produce social transformation that would jeopardize their economic and racial prerogatives. The party's inward-looking, "freedom local" priority was both personal and pragmatic, and it resulted in gains across the borderland. This was particularly the case in Cincinnati and Evansville, where Republicans toned down their nativist rhetoric and won the popular vote despite the party adopting a more progressive platform than in 1856, when Buchanan dominated the Lower Midwest.[123] Although Republican appeals were not compelling enough to overcome entrenched Democratic loyalty in the region, national victory represented hope for free labor in the West and a vital democratic check on slaveholder political supremacy. For the Democratic majority, however, Lincoln's election and its aftermath—sectional

conflagration and the gradual disintegration of slavery and the social order—excited deep-rooted fears of a Black "invasion" and a racial-labor border on the verge of rupture.

PART II

Dumping Ground

In the spring of 1862, with Union victories in short supply and federal policies shifting toward attacks on Confederate property, Ohio journalist and ardent Republican David Ross Locke adopted a new persona. Writing as a fictional character, the Reverend Petroleum Vesuvius Nasby, Locke's serialized "Nasby Letters" satirized antiwar sentiment through a borderland stock character, illuminating the supposed backwardness that many northerners associated with the Ohio Valley. Hailing from the fictional village of Wingert's Corners and writing in an unschooled vernacular intended to mimic rural dwellers, Nasby represented a particular type of western Democrat—a politically charged "Copperhead" exaggerated in his "Butternut" provincialism. He opposed the war, engaged in anti-Republican conspiracies, attempted to secede from the free state of Ohio, and aided deserters in Noble County, a real-life hotbed of antiwar activity. After fleeing to Canada in order to evade conscription, where he comically pretended to be an abolitionist, Nasby was drafted into the Lincoln's army. Rather than begrudgingly accepting the Union's liberalizing war measures like many Lower Midwestern soldiers, the unreconstructed Nasby deserted and joined the Confederacy, which he also quit before leaving the Midwest altogether. By 1865, Nasby was living in the imaginary Kentucky hamlet of Confedrit-X-Roads, banished from the loyal North to an overwhelmingly Democratic state that would soon adopt a Confederate memory of the war.[1]

Though politically marginalized by Union triumph and the forces of racial progress, Nasby's negrophobia proved resolute, and he remained devoted to "the great principle that a white man is better than a nigger."[2] Above all, he

detested emancipation and dreaded the threats of Black migration and integration. Proclaiming "Ameriky for white men!," Nasby exploited what he termed "the immense emygrashen uv niggers into Ohio."[3] "Ablishnists" and Abraham Lincoln, who delighted in Locke's columns and regularly quoted them to cabinet members, were Nasby's most prominent targets. In a tract titled "On Negro Emigration," he squawked about "kolonizin in the North" and commiserated with "poor white inhabitans" who "wood be throde out uv employment."[4] At one point in the spring of 1863, when locals ignored his warning that 40,000 freedpeople were set to descend on their Ohio community, Nasby painted himself in blackface, posed as a "villainous contraband," and roved the countryside committing crimes in order to arouse anti-emancipation sentiment.[5] Although at times Nasby appeared to patronizingly expect "poor whites" to keep their place within the social hierarchy, he also placated the broad spectrum of non-elite whites by insisting that free Blacks represented a form of "undoo competishen." It was only a matter of time, Nasby predicted at war's end, until the Black worker demanded citizenship and land, and "becomes dissatisfied with his condishn, and hankers after a better cabin and more wages." Because former slaves appeared "onfit for citizenship," Nasby avowed that "the law regulatin their labor must be made ez stringent ez ever."[6]

Locke's essays delivered a searing critique of racial prejudice and its many contradictions. By portraying Nasby as shockingly uncouth, Locke lampooned the idea of white racial superiority. In deeming Black people to be "a laborin class . . . to be guided, controlled, and worked excloosively by a sooperior class," Nasby portrayed the "master race" as a ruling class, of which he (preposterously) believed himself a member.[7] Moreover, Locke's portrayal of Nasby as hostile toward both industrious free Blacks and "poor whites" proved an oblique defense of non-elites of both races who had been "degraded" by slavery. Locke's genius lay in exposing Democratic race-baiting as a smokescreen and taking party positions to their extreme conclusions as to reveal their absurdity. He relentlessly combated the conservative fantasy that emancipation would lead to the economic and biological replacement of white men. He likewise saw the combination of racial and taxation alarms as a diversion, intended to mislead common whites from the fact that emancipation (and the nationalization of wage labor) was in their dollars-and-cents interests. The ridiculous Nasby alerted Ohio soldiers in 1864 that the war had "seezed upon yure labor," with Black liberation accomplished through the blood sacrifice of white soldiers who were now "taxt by a nigger-luvin Government to support them in idlenis." Encouraging white working-class soldiers to lay down their

arms and desert, Nasby continued: "You are eckspoosin yure lives and helth just to set free a army uv shiftlis niggers, who wont work, and who by takin yoor plasis on the farms and in the workshops, will prevent yoo from ernin a honist livin when yoo git back."[8]

But for countless borderlanders, conditioned to view interracialism as acutely threatening to their jobs and wages, fears of a growing "nigger popelashin" were more than a marker of ignorance or pathology. And by underscoring the irrational aspects of racial aversion, including among "poor whites," Locke downplayed earnest economic concerns, deflecting blame from his own political party, his own region, and his own social status. In this sense, Locke's composites were rooted in class and regional as well as partisan stereotypes. By presenting Nasby as a lazy, drunken, unkempt, and semi-literate freeloader who wrote in a specific and frequently unintelligible dialect, Locke drew on, reproduced, and breathed new life into myriad popular conventions regarding backwoodsmen and river people. Nasby and his antagonists—including "the Democrisy uv Suthern Injeany, Illinois, and Ohio"—subsisted on corn whiskey, possessed poor hygiene, professed to have rotten teeth, and were sometimes outfitted with the "butternut uniforms" of impoverished agrarians.[9] For national Republicans, Nasby was not only a negative reference point, anathema to social progressivism, moral reform, and the free labor values of honest toil, thrift, and social mobility; he was also a cultural antipode—a tonal and aesthetic "other" who dwelled, looked, sounded, and wrote in a manner befitting his inferior social group.[10]

The supreme irony of Republicans stereotyping upland southerners was that Lincoln's own "humble" background had long been a source of political attack. Southern Democrats had never accepted Lincoln as their brethren even though he was born in Kentucky, raised in southern Indiana, and imbued with southern speech patterns and storytelling habits. South Carolina's Robert Barnwell Rhett called Lincoln a "Southern renegade—spewed out of the bosom of Kentucky into Illinois." But many of Lincoln's party kindred were only marginally kinder. Whig and Republican editors had longed disparaged the railroad attorney and political aspirant as a "southerner," a "Kentuckian," or, more often, a representative of "the West," regularly mentioning his slave state roots. That familial genesis was a cause for skepticism among northern and eastern allies, including Benjamin Wade, who saw Lincoln's racial conservatism as predictable for someone "born of 'poor white trash' and educated in a slave state." While Democratic opponents portrayed Lincoln as an original mudsill, members of his own party cast him as an unre-

fined bumpkin; some dehumanized him as the "Illinois ape." Even Lincoln's "honest" persona was code for a dubious class background.[11]

Although Lincoln emerged from 1860 as the nation's foremost "white trash" progeny, political victory led a broad spectrum of Americans to frame his story as paradigmatic, the realization of free labor mobility and its cardinal tenets of thrift and toil. In both life and legend, Lincoln became a symbol for the meritocratic powers of small-scale proprietorship that transcended sectional boundaries, animating a "rail-splitter" mythos that would echo into the twentieth century. As an agent of capitalist modernity and antislavery nationalism whose politics and armies would eventually complete the work of generations of enslaved people and abolitionists by vanquishing the Slave Power, Lincoln's election represented, in some sense, the culmination of the "Yankee invasion" of the Midwest that had begun decades earlier. That he had come from "white trash" represented, for most, little more than a curiosity or temporary embarrassment. For Republicans, the difference between Nasby and Lincoln was that while political disloyalty made the latter irredeemable, a so-called politics of self-improvement and economic advancement, away from the midst of slavery and treason, delivered the former. In transforming Lincoln's class background from a political vulnerability into a vindication of party values, Locke's propaganda suggested that poor whites could be materially and morally rehabilitated through Republican principles. For most border whites, however, this emphasis on redemption spoke to the critical distinction between slavery, on the one hand, and the presence of Black people on the other. Even as popular attitudes toward emancipation and Black soldiers waxed and waned, generally softening with time and political pressure, the overturning of state Black Codes and the prospect of Black migration into the region led countless Lower Midwesterners to amplify white identity and seek new forms of racial exclusion.

While Union victory ultimately enshrined the "freedom national" values of Locke and Lincoln, the free labor mythos took a beating in the winter of 1861. Small farmers were stunned by secession and certain that looming war would devastate commercial relations with the South. Nascent trade unionism, shellacked by the panic of 1857, was nearly wiped out in the Ohio Valley. War opponents exploited lagging wages as the slowed trade that characterized the war's first year dragged into the spring of 1862. From the outset, Democrats argued that political fracture would result in the dissolution of Jacksonian alliances between agrarian interests in the West and the South while empowering Republican capitalists and their development projects that would bene-

fit the East and Great Lakes at the expense of the Ohio and Mississippi valleys. The closing of the lower Mississippi and ensuing trade restrictions led "peace men" to maintain that the war was being fought for the benefit of the credit system—the "banks, merchants, and professional men of . . . the big cities of the North."[12] As the war ground on, politicians complained about rampant corruption in government contracts, and citizens railed against freight rates and food prices, leading in part to a series of labor stoppages across the region in 1862 and 1863. Union defeats, mounting casualty lists, and unpopular policies, including a discriminatory conscription program that favored the rich, provoked resistance from below. Even the president of the Illinois Central Railroad admitted that antiwar feeling was "not a question of loyalty . . . but of bread and butter."[13]

But "bread and butter" were mediated by the racial inflection of free white labor, which subsumed class considerations under the phantasma of "negro invasion." These producerist arguments, made most forcefully by anti-emancipation Democrats, exploited a sense—sometimes real, sometimes hyperbolized—of scarcity, or the idea that wage earners were competing for a finite number of jobs and resources against a non-white "competitor." This apocalyptic vision was reinforced by the fact that the conflict produced new and staggering concentrations of wealth, particularly through speculation and government-aided military contracts, as anxieties over employment and wages exacerbated fears of emancipation, spurred by the War Department's introduction of Black farm workers into Illinois in the fall of 1862.[14] Despite populist strains, this Democratic fusion of economic and racial distress was tinged with antiradicalism that linked "Black Republicans" to the "red republicanism" of Europe and its socialist émigrés. On the Republican side, longstanding critiques of the borderland morphed into an incendiary brand of loyalty politics, and descriptors including "Butternut" and "Egypt" became synonymous with pro-Confederate sentiment. All things considered, self-described producers on the border had well-founded reasons to fret about the war's impact *even as* cynical and opportunistic Democratic elites consolidated personal and political power through the slogan "rich man's war, poor man's fight." Karl Marx described this schizophrenic, sectionally "in between" mentality of the region's small and wage-earning agrarians. "The efficient farmers in Indiana and Ohio hate the Negro second only to the slave-owner," he explained. "For them he is the symbol of slavery and the debasement of the working class, and the Democratic press threatens them daily with an inundation of their territories by the 'nigger.' "[15]

The subsequent chapters in Part II explore how civil war both challenged and reinforced the free white labor consensus, once again illuminating what Marx identified as the impasse of small white freeholders hating both "the Negro" and "the slave-owner"—of recognizing and condemning "masterhood" while eschewing solidarity with the most violently oppressed segment of the working class. Again, politicians, businessmen, editors, and clergymen led the way, promoting white identity and political borders as parallel and sacrosanct—and in need of protection. They proclaimed that confiscation and emancipation would engulf the Lower Midwest with free Blacks, as conscription, labor unrest, Confederate raids, mass death, and the general threat of the unknown animated dismay over "Africanization." Characterizing the formerly enslaved as both stupid and cunning—simultaneously lazy and "natural born" laborers—anti-emancipation propagandists held that their presence would drain community coffers and displace white workers. As the *Cincinnati Enquirer* foretold in the spring of 1862, "Hundreds of thousands, if not millions of slaves will come north and west, and will either be competitors with our white mechanics and laborers, degrading them by the competition, or they will have to be supported as paupers and criminals at the public expense."[16] Citing the impending "negro invasion of Illinois," the *Indianapolis Daily Sentinel* reminded readers that free labor alone was insufficient to prevent—and might indeed encourage—the "importation of whole brigades of free negroes" into the region. Rather, "free *white* labor is what the people of Illinois want," including "the right of the poor white man to labor at a living wage without being undermined by the blacks of the South."[17] Although the border was always far more porous in reality than in either the Republican imagination (which contrasted "slave" and "free" society) or Democratic fear-mongering (which warned that slavery's disruption would "mongrelize" a presumably "pure" society), the war's radicalizing effects, from escaped slaves to federal confiscation to changing political sentiment among Union soldiers, threatened to upset the delicate racial-labor equilibrium. To white producers who dreaded being sacrificed on the altar of Black freedom, the Democratic mantra of "the Constitution as it is and Union as it was" entailed a steadfast maintenance of the Ohio River border—as a bulwark against precarity.

Above all, the process of emancipation—its buildup, implementation, and aftermath—galvanized fears among Lower Midwesterners that their communities would be "inundated by a flood of Negroes pouring across the Ohio River." As George M. Fredrickson argues, "This sense of a black peril, building up in the South as slavery reached what were supposed to be its natural limits

of expansion, haunted the popular imagination of the Midwest and reached panic proportions when the Civil War brought the prospect of emancipation."[18] Slave liberation injected new life into what David Roediger describes as "the idea of a Republican 'abolition-capitalist' conspiracy to unleash 'hordes of freedmen' to compete for white jobs in the North."[19] Indeed, to apprehensive observers, allusions to natural disaster and climatic phenomena—*flood*, *wave*, *tide*, *surge*, *tornado*, *tempest*—effectively relayed the scope, transformation, and sense of collective harm that expanding war aims seemed certain to let loose. Watching as white soldiers assisted in the unmanacling of a people that many of them saw as an existential threat to their livelihoods, Frederick Douglass worried that Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois were "so completely under the influence of color prejudice" that they might repel the settlement of freedpeople altogether.[20] Democratic politicians and newspapers fueled the hysteria through sensational quantifications of Black migrants—hundreds of thousands of them, perhaps millions—who would supposedly infiltrate a border "overrun with worthless, idle and dissolute negroes."[21] Expressed through what historian Eugene H. Berwanger terms the "dumping ground idea," white Lower Midwesterners constructed a new vocabulary to articulate the matrix of shifting threats related to racial and economic replacement: "free negroism," "niggerism," "nigger equalization," "blackness," and "Africanization."[22]

The "dumping ground" was, of course, a phantom. Even at the height of Black migration northward, there were no roving millions of job-stealing aliens, nor had there ever been an inviolable border between slave and freedom, or between white and Black, on which emancipation might suddenly infract. But the impact of the dumping ground as a bête noire—and a political weapon—was no less real. The conflict's metamorphic racial policies appeared to pit borderlanders' Unionist politics against their desire for racial homogeneity and understandings of security and self. Looking to square the problem of how to maintain their political nation without altering their racial communities or endangering their livelihoods, border people largely accepted a range of radical changes—and indeed proved critical agents of those changes—while relying increasingly on local forms of racial exclusion and control that would come to replace both ineffectual state policies and colonization fantasies. In this sense, the social transformation wrought by war and emancipation animated new material fears and heightened racial identity among restoration-minded border whites even as they played a vital role in slavery's destruction as qualified revolutionaries.

CHAPTER 3

No More Banks and No More Negroes

It was a chain reaction beyond their control. Having worked assiduously to reestablish their footing after the depression of the late 1850s, organized workingmen on freedom's edge, along with the rest of the nation, now faced an unprecedented crisis. The election of 1860 demonstrated that Lower Midwesterners largely agreed that free labor, white or otherwise, was best protected through political union. But growing schism in the Deep South suddenly threatened to destabilize the region's race and labor balance, undermining, at least temporarily, citizens' shared conceptions of economic liberty. Two months after Lincoln's election, amid the downward spiral of the secession winter, five hundred apprehensive workers met at Cincinnati's Sixth Street Market to address the impact of disunion. Although they had recently revived the General Trades' Union and established a Workingmen's Party, and activists such as iron molder Frederick Oberkline hoped that a broad association of toilers could stave off war, the overall mood was dismal. Organizers predicted that a conflict "brought about by the acts of designing tricksters, politicians, and demagogues" might result in laborers being used as cannon fodder while industrialists lined their pockets. At the same time, trade unionists increasingly recognized slavery as an anchor on organized labor and charged the Slave Power with subverting popular democracy. The committee therefore concluded that secession in response to a lawful presidential election was illegal, and that the interests of "the laboring masses" were best represented within a permanent and constitutional Union, to which they pledged their absolute allegiance.[1]

In the end, no peace-saving grand alliance of labor materialized, and war did indeed fracture tenuous alliances of producers, both politically and physically, disconnecting them from their workshops and factories and casting them in a thousand different directions.[2] But as the Cincinnati meeting demonstrated, although its loyalty to party and, ultimately, to one another, ebbed, labor's fidelity to the nation was never in doubt. While Republican ideology was strongest among small farm owners and the burgher proprietors, organized workers across the borderland asserted the illegality of secession and pledged their devotion to the republic in dozens of meetings between January and April 1861. Iron molders in Louisville maintained that their "material prosperity" depended on the preservation of the republic.[3] In Cincinnati, federated toilers cited the spirit of 1776, now entrusted "in the safe hands of the working-men of 1861," as reason to oppose treasonous slaveholders.[4] Other pro-Union labor gatherings were held in New Albany, Evansville, and Alton. The socialists of the German Workingmen's Society, who met President-elect Lincoln at his Cincinnati hotel en route to Washington, denounced all "compromises between the interests of free labor and slave labor." Trade unionists also became early volunteers, with workingmen's companies composed of miners, printers, and painters. To resolutely loyal artisans and wage earners, however, as well as tenant farmers, war clouds nevertheless portended deprivation. Numerous labor meetings in the Lower Midwest initially urged conciliation, or "Union and Compromise," and several endorsed the adoption of the Crittenden resolutions that would have permanently enshrined slavery into the U.S. Constitution.[5] Even the Republican press warned that any disruption to free navigation of the rivers would impact not only banking and large-scale commerce, but also the lifework of mechanics, farmers, boatmen, and small craftsmen.[6]

As war skepticism persisted, especially in the rural borderland, Republicans and War Democrats attacked the unconverted through highly classed regional characterizations. Conceptions of poor whites had evolved rapidly during the 1860 presidential campaign, as national observers began referring to border free-state people pejoratively as "Butternuts." Named for the brown color derived from white walnut tree hulls that some poor used to dye their clothes (sometimes called "Hoosier jeans"), the term soon became a common descriptor for upland southerners and their "western" offspring.[7] Overwhelmingly Baptist in religion and Democratic in politics, so-called Butternuts resided generally in "the regions along the Ohio River," according to the *Evansville Journal*, and other outlets pinpointed southern Ohio,

southern Indiana, and southern Illinois as their precise habitat.[8] Most were river people who traded along the Ohio, Wabash, Miami, Illinois, Mississippi, and Missouri waterways. Others were detached from the market economy, and "Butternut" became a synonym for, according to one editor, "a fellow who never did a stroke of work in his life." As one wartime editor made clear, the "butternut empire" centered on southern Illinois, whose inhabitants were most zealous in their devotion to the "Dimmicratic" ticket, the party title intentionally misspelled for comic effect and to underscore the supposed benightedness of border people.[9] According to historian David Montgomery, Butternut politicos combined "antistate political conservatism and antiperfectionist religious conservativism," inimical to what they deemed the imposition of Puritan values, Yankee money, or racial equality. And while purporting to speak for "poor white men," they were deeply hostile to the type of social leveling brought by abolitionism, labor radicalism, or political Jacobinism.[10] Butternuts were, somewhat paradoxically, both collateral damage of the emerging "money system" and deeply adversarial to racial and ethnic cosmopolitanism of that system's most fundamental challengers.

Republican rhetoric complicated the already enigmatic relationship between classification and capitalism by imagining Butternuts as pathologically averse to land improvement and entrepreneurial aspiration. Butternuts were not simply Democrats or rural western people—a regional epithet, saturated in pernicious stereotypes—but pauperized whites who grew long hair, lived on hogs and hominy, smoked green tobacco, and lived in dilapidated dwellings. Their downstate counterparts were, according to the *Chicago Tribune*, not merely disloyal, but also uncivilized "savages" who lacked modern ideologies of progress.[11] For their part, Democrats recognized "Butternut" as a classist designation, even while co-opting the term. The *Cincinnati Enquirer*, for example, contended that "Butternut" was a marker not of loyalty, as homespun brown clothes were worn by loyal and rebel soldiers alike, but of poverty. The editor explained that moneyless volunteers had worn brown, home-dyed garments when recruited into the Union Army. In derision their "*store-clothed*" companions called them "Butternuts," he clarified, "and, as they were mostly Democrats from Democratic districts, the name, ere long, was applied by Republicans to the whole Democratic Party."[12]

As wartime opposition to the Lincoln administration intensified, "Butternut" took on additionally partisan dimensions. One Wisconsin newspaper clarified that while the shibboleth had been first applied to haggard-look-

ing volunteers from southern Illinois, Missouri, and Kentucky, it quickly became a mark of derision toward border Democrats and the region itself.[13] The *Indiana Sentinel* complained that Whig characterizations of the "pokeberry Democracy" had simply evolved into Republican scorn for "butternut Democracy," as both phrases "mean the same thing—a contempt for those who earn their bread by honest toil."[14] "Butternut" assumed an increasingly sectional meaning through the war's first year as western soldiers directed it at the rebel enemy.[15] By 1862, the label became tantamount to *any* opposition to the war, as well as other forms of social and political noncompliance, with Union men leveling the term at civilians on the home front who eschewed Lincoln's taxation, conscription, emancipation, or enlistment policies.[16] That "Butternut syndicate" contained a number of regional and local flavors, all of them either active war opponents or openly pro-Confederate: "copperheads" in Indiana, "guerrillas" in Illinois, "bushwhackers" in Kentucky, and "Vallandighammers" in Ohio, named for the leader of the state's Peace Democrats.[17] From early 1863 through the presidential election the following year, the expression conjured homegrown disloyalty, as war proponents warned of "Butternut conspiracies" to sabotage the Union effort through assassination and the armed takeover of polling places. They also blamed anti-conscription sentiment, fueled by the notorious spring 1864 draft riot in Charleston, Illinois, on "Butternut agitation."[18]

Lower Midwesterners bristled at the notion that they were disloyal. A postwar history of Wayne and Clay counties explained that while most southern Illinoisans possessed a Jacksonian sense of Unionism, they viewed the "fire-eating idiots of the South" and the "canting agitators of the North" with equal contempt. Above all, Egyptians despised "loyal slanderers" from outside the region who stereotyped their portion of the state as "the land of ignorance and traitors." Although often quick to contrast their "western" loyalty, premised on anti-Blackness and sectional moderation, from that of "Yankees" in the Eastern Theater, border people demonstrated their constancy by filling draft quotas and measuring their volunteer numbers against those of other states and wealthier regions.[19] Regional chauvinism alongside hostility toward so-called sectional extremists was part and parcel of a political tradition that appeased border state slaveholders, as the constant potential for conflict along the Ohio River demanded a compromise politics and the creation of a sectional "middle" or "center" based in part on restricting the flow of runaways out of Kentucky and the entry of free Blacks into their communities. Put another way, conservative Unionism triumphed in the Lower Midwest in part

because vigilant political accommodation had long been necessary to control the movement of Black people in the region.[20]

Meanwhile, Peace Democrats, who sought negotiation and settlement with the Confederacy, appropriated the "Butternut" label. Practitioners insisted on its age-old "historical associations," once used to describe "costumes worn in the mountain ranges of Kentucky and Tennessee, and in southern Illinois and Missouri."[21] To many border people, "Butternut" also summoned the frontier myths and anti-Indian violence of white settlers. Associating "store-clothed" dress with urbane femininity, a Democratic editor recalled that when the "war cry of the Indians" had threatened his family as a boy, it was the "Butternut-clad sons of Kentucky" who rose up to defend white homesteads.[22] Another partisan even thanked his abolitionist opponents for the rhetorical gift and predicted that, like "Old Hickory," it would long stand as a proud party symbol.[23] As reverence for the title grew, the Democratic *Cincinnati Enquirer* pondered its attributes, explaining that the physical shape of the butternut hull depicted "two hearts linked together, as were North and South during Democratic rule." This emblem of sectional compromise represented "an impenetrable bulwark against both disunion and abolitionism."[24] Although the expected positive connotations never materialized, Democratic attempts to refashion the term as one of endearment illustrated the nexus of class, race, and regional romanticism.

In other words, "Butternut" linked political borders to a process of patrolling, methodizing, and excluding whites of a particular social class by discerning which people of European ancestry were and were not sufficiently "enlightened." Because its intonations were also partisan, its subjects associated with hostility toward the Lincoln government, the term proved malleable enough to target a wide swath of supposedly "disloyal" persons; it also absolved its bourgeois users from looking inward toward their own political parties and social class. Moreover, the critique's emphasis on etiquette—on what so-called Butternuts wore, ate, drank, read (or did not read), and what type of labor they performed (or did not perform)—was not simply a form of social control or a class judgment. It also involved establishing and reinforcing the parameters of "civilization," an idea imbued with racial assumptions and sensibilities. Though rarely explicitly racial, in the sense that it did not overtly refer to Butternuts as a different race, the term nevertheless shaped popular ideas about what it meant to be "white." As anthropologist John Hartigan Jr. urges, rather than looking "solely for direct articulations of racial sentiments" or even ideological signs of racial repression that do not mention

race (structural racism), scholars of race might also "engage the slew of categorical perceptions, discursive objectifications, and cultural assessments of belonging and difference that shape all projections of 'community.'"[25] In this sense, the existence of real or perceived Butternuts in the free states disrupted the "natural" order—political and economic, as well as racial—and signified the "social bottom" of the white race. Long after slavery's downfall, Gilded Age elites would continue to employ the euphemism as a means of establishing respectable "civility" within the race by culturally disciplining, in effect, both a class and a region of degraded white people.

HYSTERICS CONCERNING HIERARCHIES OF WHITENESS were exacerbated by cross-class fears that war might engender social transformation. Both proslavery writers and free-soil theorists had long predicted that "sudden emancipation" would result in a "struggle for supremacy" between the Black and white races, particularly along borders.[26] Even while foregrounding the power relations involved in the manufacture of racial difference, it is impossible to fully separate origin from audience or detach internalized prejudice from expediency. Opportunistic politicians and fearmongering editors, for whom race sensationalism often translated to policy wins and newspaper sales, exploited economic volatility, Union battlefield defeats, and other lags in morale for political advantage. Speaking at a rally in Boonville two days after Lincoln's election, Thomas A. Hendricks of Indiana predicted that Lincoln's election would "inundate the free states with negroes, who would enter the farms and workshops in competition with white men."[27] Negrophobia also trickled up from those farms and workshops, expressed by white wage earners whose psychological investment in white supremacy bolstered its cultural production. With confiscation and emancipation accelerating, the spring and summer of 1862 saw a heightened dialectic between the producers and consumers of racial panic. War skeptics balanced intimations of Black "plagues" and "floods"—Biblical scourges, violent oceanic activity, and devastated landscapes—against appeals to material condition. Concerned about how war might alter the racial and economic compositions of their communities, Democrats in Perry County, Indiana, which Lincoln had carried by twenty-nine votes, reflexively looked to the region's accommodationist tradition to protect their "commercial, manufacturing, and agricultural interests," proclaiming that the Ohio River shall not become "the boundary line of contending nations."[28]

The War Department's blockade of the Mississippi River created a "Hydra-headed monster" of business decline, igniting antiwar sentiment. With southern markets closed, railroad freight rates doubled, and stocks of wheat, flour, and pork sat idle. In many cases farmers burned unsold corn as fuel. Food surpluses depressed farm prices, and unemployment and bankruptcies rose, impacting firms from Cincinnati to Cairo and decimating paper money. Dozens of Illinois banks shuttered during the panic of 1861, and Democrats used the downturn to attack the Lincoln administration's war policies. The confiscation of rebel property that evolved into emancipation, and the whiff of racial leveling suggested by both, was part of what arch Lincoln critic Clement Vallandigham termed the "economic exploitation" of borderland farmers. Through a western sectionalist rhetoric that conjured Jefferson and Jackson, Peace Democrats exploited the plight of small tillers and wage earners to assail big banks, railroads, hard money, and manufacturing, then alleged in conspiratorial terms that freedpeople were the unwitting handmaidens of those industrial interests. Discontented producers also charged Republicans with promoting "class legislation" via the Banking Act, the Contract Labor Act, and the Conscription Act and its hated $300 clause, which effectively exempted wealthy men from the draft. Taken together, these racial-material grievances shaped the politics of innumerable Lower Midwesterners and formed the basis of what would become known as Copperheadism, whose antiwar leaders were depicted as venomous snakes by the pro-war press.[29] Although its economic populism and appeals to "western" identity foreshadowed broader attacks against corporate capitalism through generally left-wing agrarian movements including Grangerism, Greenbackism, and Populism, Copperhead mobilization also centered on white supremacy and defending the racial order.[30]

Even war supporters, however, dramatized what Ira Berlin termed the "Negro Influx Question."[31] Although white fears of being "overrun" by freedpeople were alive and well in the Mid-Atlantic, as evidenced by the tide of Democratic reaction in Pennsylvania and New York, as well as the Upper Midwest, Lower Midwesterners were flanked on two sides by slavery, and their nearness to the South gave added resonance to both contact and competition with former slaves.[32] Using the border as a prop, conservatives shaped anti-Black anxieties to meet fluid and regionally discrete conditions regarding economic depression, changing war policies, and political elections. The party of Douglas made electoral gains in the fall of 1861 in part by warning of a jobs-endangering "nigger invasion" and accusing Republicans of war profi-

teering by offering inflated contracts to business associates. Excitable Democrats in "Copperhead country," characterized by "small homesteads, poor soils, and widespread illiteracy," estimated that the number of migrant Black laborers might be in the hundreds of thousands; others warned of "millions of vagrants" who would "rush to the North to be amongst the people who had been the means of their liberation . . . and while their condition would not be improved, the free white laborers of the North would have to compete with them on the same level."[33] That winter, newspapers reported that the "cities and villages along the Ohio River" were "rapidly filling up with strange Africans."[34] The *Portsmouth Times*, for one, broadcast that the north bank would soon "swarm with a horde of idle and pestilent negroes, drawing their support from society," as common people were supposedly shouldering the tax burden of "shipping negroes" into the free states.[35] The notion of freedpeople draining public coffers also assumed gendered dimensions through admonitions that women and burdensome children would be thrown into almshouses.[36] But the primary emphasis remained on white workingmen, whom the *Indianapolis Sentinel* griped were now "compelled to compete with the labor of negroes," who were without "any means of making a living, except by the hardest and roughest labor, [which] is having the effect of reducing the price of labor."[37] As federal confiscation policies widened and enslaved people increasingly absconded to Union lines, Lincoln's opponents asserted that the war's character was changing from conservative political preservation to "revolutionist" property destruction. A righteous battle for "the Union as it was" was becoming an "abolitionist raid" for the procurement of cheap labor.

Meanwhile, a partisan rift emerged over economic policy that presaged the Republican turn toward corporate capitalism following the war. Chicago mayor John Wentworth, an antebellum Democrat with a pro-labor reputation who became a wartime Radical Republican, noted as early as 1861 that Illinois politicians "who were sound on the Negro position were rotten on the bank question."[38] That divide was exposed in early 1862 when Illinois Democrats presented the new state constitution that voters had called for in 1860. Labeled the "Egyptian swindle" by Lincoln men, and ostensibly authored by a "Copperhead legislature" representing "the most disloyal population of all the Free states," the proposed charter attacked bank consolidation, prompting one critic to ask, "shall the manufacturing, agricultural and commercial interests of northern Illinois be put into Egyptian bondage?"[39] With much of the Midwest still mired in depression, prominent Peace Democrats including William J. Allen and Orlando Ficklin made anti-railroad and anti-monop-

oly arguments and promoted the "Granger idea" of state regulation of public utilities.[40] Convention delegate Daniel Reilly, a miller from Randolph County who became an agricultural advocate through the National Grange movement during the 1870s, tied regional identity to skepticism toward corporate capitalism:

> We believe down in Egypt—in that part of Egypt I have the honor of representing—that all corporations are creatures of the State; that what rights and immunities they have are all derived from the State; and they have derived their existence from the State. And we believe also, that railroad corporations are a power in the State not to be despised, but rather to be treated with favor; but that these great establishments are not worthy of favor if they do not favor the interests of the people.[41]

Democratic populism in Illinois was not without indispensable racial qualifiers, however, and the 1862 constitutional convention, which looked to codify the state's 1853 Black exclusion law, revealed the broad popularity of racial aversion. Accentuating the Black exclusion clause, Democrats framed partisan loyalty as tantamount to support for an all-white society. Proclaiming that a vote against the constitution was a vote for race mixing, the *Jonesboro Gazette* reminded readers that although Republicans purported to be the true "friends of free white labor," only the Democratic constitution could "exclude negroes from our midst, and ennoble and maintain the price of white labor."[42] Voters narrowly rejected the constitution overall, sinking Democratic proposals regarding banking reform and redistricting. Yet support for its "black code" provisions—the prohibition of Black voting, office holding, and residency—proved universally popular and passed by wide margins.[43] They were especially well received in Little Egypt and among wage earners who worried that a potential alliance between Republican owners in the North and a non-white and newly emancipated proletariat in the South would precipitate their "replacement." Across the state, 70 percent of Illinoisans endorsed a ban on Black settlement; 86 percent hoped to bar Black voting. According to the *Illinois State Register*, the lopsided tally represented "an unmistakable public sentiment" against "the state being flooded with a pauper negro population, to fill our jails and poor houses, increase taxation and degrade and cheapen the labor of the free white toiling men."[44]

Not all anti-Black trepidation centered on work and wages. Seemingly extra-material appeals included the protection of white womanhood, the

dangers of race "mixture," and Black stereotypes concerning innate laziness, poverty, and criminality. Conservatives warned of "amalgamation," "mixed affinities," and other euphemisms for interracial sex, sometimes describing the supposed aesthetics, noises, and smells of racial equality.[45] Prophets of gendered and sensory-based racial alarm were adamant that southern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois should not become places of ethnic hybridity with dozens of skin hues and racial combinations—"the Texas of emancipated blacks." They argued that the best way to block the inescapable "deluge" of an "indolent, shiftless, improvident, poor" race that possessed "an inclination to steal" was through stringent exclusion laws and comprehensive colonization efforts.[46] Even so, those arguments were rarely detached from economic unease, and the assertion that Lincoln's policies would somehow "degrade white labor." Popular hostility toward increasing "hard war" policies was not merely cultural or ideological, or rooted primarily in the maintenance of racial demography.[47] Rather, it developed within the political economic context of capitalism along a divided labor system, of precarious workers who forged their own political cultures, but who were also largely subordinate to an ownership class which feared that military confiscation might further stifle regional commerce or, worse yet, come to challenge of other forms of property.

As "negro competition" panic spread, Lincoln's opponents combined racial-material fears with defiant regional identities as disaffected westerners. Democrats in Little Egypt insisted that the real "friends of negro equality" were not common farmers and soldiers, but big banks, railroad corporations, corrupt officeholders, and "rich moneyed monopolies" of the North and East.[48] On the homefront, civilians turned on "Yankeed" soldiers who brought "confiscated" Black people into the free states, presumably as hired help, but often under highly coerced or exploited conditions. While Republicans accused Democrats of exaggerating the "invasion" threat, the presence of "Sambo" or "Ethiopian" workers in previously all-white communities led locals to charge distant bureaucrats with "rooting out free white labor."[49] Lower Midwesterners feared not simply the scale but also the pace of slavery's destruction. In Ohio, Democrats maintained that "sudden emancipation, and consequent negro emigration northward" would lead to "a deprecation of white men's wages through negro competition; and resulting degradation of the white to the black." And in the event that freedpeople did not ransack white workplaces, the "idleness, helplessness, and infirmity" would prove a burden on public treasuries.[50]

Democrats increasingly framed challenges to slavery in class terms, as the machination of far-off elites. The *New Albany Weekly Ledger* portrayed confiscation as a capitalist "swindle" in which politicians and speculators were attempting to enrich themselves through the procurement of land and cheap labor "at the expense of the people" being taxed to fund the war. Should it play out, colonization (what the editor described as profit-seeking disguised as "philanthropy") would prove a boon to government contractors and make industrialists the new "aristocrats of the land" in the defeated South.[51] Even as an expression of zealous Democrats, the phrase "abolition aristocrats" betrayed both the lived and intellective divide between bourgeois do-gooders and the laborers who were continuously bombarded with warnings about how reform threatened their security.[52] One Ohio editor hoped to end slavery in order to populate the free states—and their own industries—with a cheaper and more pliable labor force. Black "help" was intuitively cheaper than white "help," he explained, and when Black workers could no longer labor they would be turned out and "supported at the public expense." These elites "hoped not only to degrade white labor, but to supersede it," thus radically reorienting the "southern borders of northern states."[53]

Congress's widening of the Confiscation Acts in July 1862 heightened racial discourses, with white identity scaled to fears of "negro invasion." Exclusionists framed the predicted influx not as impacting all white people equally and at once, but as a "tide" emanating from the Ohio River that would shock "those states bordering on the line of slavery," which would then "become the resort of thousands of emancipation slaves."[54] Democratic legislators in Indiana also decried "the present disturbances on our border" and doubled down on racial restriction because "honest, laboring white men should have no competition with the black race [and] the soil of Indiana should belong to the white man."[55] By summer, there were mass reports that "poor laboring white men" were losing their jobs to "make room" for confiscated Blacks. Standing firm against this "importation," and in favor of "the laboring classes" forced to "compete" with freed Blacks and suffer "the reduce [sic] price of wages," one Ohio paper urged anxious white producers to "maintain their mastery," through violence if necessary. The alternative, they warned, was a second, domestic rebellion that would originate on slavery's border and spread across the free states. This insurrection would not be a constitutional squabble over political separation, but a class-inflected race war between white and Black workers on the boundary line between the nation's free and slave labor systems.[56]

WHAT MARX TERMED THE "REVOLUTIONARY waging of war" did indeed reconfigure social relations in the Lower Midwest.[57] In army camps and on picket lines along the Ohio River, Union soldiers, who were disproportionately wage earners and tenant farmers, first encountered a self-emancipating proletariat. There was no class-based solidarity, and initial policies toward enslaved people were ad hoc. The vast majority of white soldiers had little interest in either returning *or* embracing "striking" bondsmen. Broad support for a general emancipation order built slowly, primed by federal policy including the Confiscation Acts, as well as by personal encounters with enslaved people and aggressive military officers in the Western Theater who afforded little protection for Confederate property or, in the case of John C. Frémont, assaulted slavery directly. In time, white soldiers and civilians grew to recognize that suppressing the rebellion would require uprooting the slave system. In spite of that, countless Lower Midwesterners perceived emancipation—any potential disruption of the status quo along their borders—as threatening to their livelihoods and identities. Exploiting this fear, some white elites stoked slave liberation panic to influence voter or worker behavior; others backed emancipation out of either moral conviction or economic interest (the desire for surplus labor). Yet freedom to slaves, as most borderlanders initially saw it, had the potential to "contaminate" the white race by imperiling the legal and economic advantages that kept poor and middling whites separate from and above bondspeople.

The "movement of slaves" development, which Marx identified before the first shots were fired, occurred earliest and most evidently in southern Illinois.[58] At the strategic confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, the city of Cairo was a peninsula at the state's southern tip, surrounded by slavery on three sides. It became a militarized border when Union forces seized the area in June 1861 and established Fort Defiance, a swampy training ground that would become a jumping-off point for military campaigns of the western armies.[59] From the war's first weeks, freedom seekers from Missouri and western Kentucky, now deemed an area of "insurrectionary control," absconded to Union lines or made their way to Cairo's levees.[60] In some cases, Union officers impressed enslaved people into personal service.[61] Federal soldiers seized others whom they saw as aiding the Confederate war effort and brought them to Cairo.[62] These renegades, captives, and displaced persons were the first of more than fifteen thousand formerly enslaved people who would settle in Illinois over the course of the war, tripling the state's Black population.[63]

Growing numbers of freedpeople led Cairo's military authorities to estab-

lish a massive contraband camp and employ freedpeople as menial laborers, susceptible to overwork, abduction, arrest, disease, and starvation.[64] Black institutions, including a boarding house and schools, soon followed. Meanwhile, white soldiers and civilians recognized the freedpeople's presence as a violation of the state's Black exclusion laws, and some attempted to prohibit Black people from certain worksites and sections of town.[65] Yet the legitimacy of exclusion laws, which had always been weakly enforced, mostly crumbled before the wartime exigencies, as liberation unveiled the harsh realities of "free labor," including, in the event of unemployment or hyper-exploitation, the freedom to starve or be worked to death. A correspondent from *Douglass's Monthly*, operated by the famed abolitionist, reported in September 1862 that the formerly enslaved people he encountered in Cairo were most concerned about work opportunities, and desperation for employment brought them into violent conflict with other toilers. As the reporter found, "Common laborers, *particularly* the Irish, are raging intensely and fiercely here against those poor and unfortunate and innocent people."[66]

However, backlash against Black freedom was not consigned to either urban wage earners or race-baiting politicos. If, as historian Victor Hicken argues, anti-emancipation sentiment was most ardent in rural and heavily Democratic areas that were mostly removed from the market economy and whose populations were disproportionately southern born, then one must consider the cultural (as well as material) components of that opposition.[67] Of course, the fact that Black migrants did not, on the whole, pose viable threats to the life choices of rural whites did not preclude editors and politicians from using bread-and-butter arguments to inflame anti-Black prejudice. In the deepest parts of the Midwest, many predicted that emancipation would not merely turn western troops against the war but also drive them to attack liberated Blacks. "Their places, in their absences, are to be filled by the negro," an editor explained. "Their labor, when they do return, is to be brought into competition and degradation with black labor." He then predicted that ex-soldiers, in their hatred and desperation, would embark on "the extermination of the black race."[68] Despite this genocidal language, whites who attacked Black movement and mobility did not simply believe that Black people were subhuman or "naturally" menial, for what indomitable threat could someone so inferior truly pose? On the contrary, the violence of racial restriction and expulsion contained, at its core, a basic recognition of the humanity of the people they hoped to proscribe from the body politic.

War supporters and opponents alike also sought an economic silver

lining—or how to profit from Black migration. Democratic elites vilified the "hundreds of thousands of black barbarians" ostensibly set to enter the state, yet they recognized freedpeople as a particularly exploitable and "valuable" labor force.[69] Republicans, meanwhile, rationalized Black liberation as a non-threat, and perhaps even a benefit, to white labor. Some commentators maintained that the inexorable and self-evident fact of Black inferiority would settle the economic question, as any impartial contest between white and Black worker would surely privilege the former. Although Cincinnati's *Catholic Telegraph* opposed slavery, its editors avowed that free Blacks lacked the aptitude and genetic constitution to challenge white workers, as it was "not in his blood."[70] Other emancipation proponents alleged that freedpeople would remain in the South because racial prejudice was stronger and exclusion more embedded north of the Ohio River. Even Indiana congressman George W. Julian, among the most egalitarian of Radical Republicans, reckoned that free Blacks would be "excluded from the northern States and Territories by their uncongenial climate, by his attachment to his birthplace, and by Anglo-Saxon domination and enterprise."[71] As the war progressed, the notion that emancipation would deter Black people from leaving the South, and therefore prove the best means of preserving white republicanism in the Lower Midwest, gained increased currency. Based on the strategic combination of colonization and exclusion, such logic held that a wage-labor economy in the South would surely oblige former bondspeople to remain in their "natural" environment, and in close proximity to their families. In the words of a Cincinnati relief commissioner, northerly migration was impeded "by the laws of climate and their own constitution."[72]

Predictably, slavery's disintegration aroused violence on the border. The largest anti-Black riot occurred in July 1862 in Cincinnati, the result of what one historian called "the matter of wages and Negro competition with whites."[73] The origins of worker discontent were manifold. The golden age of the steamboat was fast receding, and regional economic and political power gradually shifted toward the Great Lakes. Though a war boom took hold in some industries, fueled by government contracts, the sectional conflict exacerbated problems in water commerce, as detachment from southern markets caused Cincinnati's river tonnage to decline by 27.5 percent in 1862. Recession led steamers to recruit Black deckhands at wages lower than second-class whites, such as the "not quite white" Irish, as demagogic newspapers like the *Cincinnati Enquirer* fed anti-Black and anti-abolitionist violence. Irish laborers, themselves victims of nativist hatred, felt they had the most to lose by

an influx of freedpeople. Fostering Cincinnati's reputation as inhospitable to Black workers, they responded to economic stressors and the personal affront of perceived racial leveling by periodically ambushing Blacks on the streets, which the press described as "race wars."[74] Most infamously, a crowd of "highly respectable" whites ambushed Wendell Phillips during a public address at Pike's Opera House that March, defaming him as "nigger Phillips" and instigating a general disturbance.[75] By early July the city's levees were a locus of labor unrest, led by aggrieved Irish roustabouts and stevedores, many of whom were "idle" and out of work. Cincinnati was primed for explosion.

On July 10 a minor altercation between two Black workers and a group of whites devolved into race-based attacks all along the waterfront. The press broadcast that the "riot" was caused by Blacks underbidding white labor, and some editors maintained that the newcomers had drawn the indignation of Irish workers by refusing to follow them during a walkout.[76] The *Cincinnati Commercial* reported that white-on-Black torment began in response to the importation of Black strikebreakers (in reality, Black levee workers predated the Irish). Yet what began as vaguely economic violence soon took on a life of its own, as white mobs traversed the Fourth Ward, indiscriminately ransacking Black neighborhoods. The initial determination that "no damned niggers should work on the levee" gave way to the idea that "the Niggers would be cleaned out" of the city entirely, and in the coming days white mobs roamed Bucktown, targeting Black homes and churches. Far from passive victims, Black Cincinnatians counterattacked, both on the waterfront and by destroying property in the largely Irish Thirteenth Ward. However, outnumbered and outgunned, Blacks ultimately fled the city en masse. When Cincinnati's "better elements" finally intervened to end the rioting on July 16, it had less to do with humanitarianism than with fear that the "property-damaging proclivities of the mobs" might spill into wealthy commercial and residential zones.[77] The rioters dispersed, and Black families and laborers soon returned.[78] But with the city under threat, municipal and military officials subsequently coerced many would-be levee workers to construct the city's defenses. Helping stifle a potential Confederate raid in September 1862, the exploits of Cincinnati's Black Brigade became part of emancipationist lore, codified by Black socialist Peter H. Clark, who viewed it as a pivotal event in the history of the city he deemed to be the most race prejudiced in the nation.[79]

Downriver, invasion scare proved equally volcanic. Near Evansville, where citizens posted placards warning migrant Blacks to leave the city, Indiana soldiers prevented runaway slaves from crossing the Ohio, as the object of

the war "was not to make Indiana an asylum for negroes."[80] In July, New Albany experienced one of the worst anti-Black riots of the war when citizens responded to the growing presence of "vicious contrabands" by attacking freedpeople, especially in the largely Black neighborhood of West Union, and destroying the property of pro-Lincoln citizens.[81] As usual, Black workers suffered the brunt of white violence, with the mob assaulting a boatman "in the most dreadful and inhuman manner . . . his face and head literally pounded into jelly."[82] Blacks who fled were expelled from neighboring towns, prompting hundreds to leave the southern part of the state and seek safety farther north.[83] Over the following months, partly in response to the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, city authorities posted sentinels at ferry landings to prevent Black entry into Indiana.[84] Democratic elites continued to fan the flames by warning of French-style "revolution" and wildly exaggerating the impact of emancipation's diaspora.[85] By the time Lincoln's policy took effect, partisans in New Albany alleged that "a million negroes" were headed "toward the borders of Indiana."[86]

Meanwhile, Illinoisans howled that geography made their borders even more vulnerable than Indiana's. Predicting that a "black stream will overrun the state," the *Illinois State Register* argued that while Republican "equality" sounded high-minded, it actually involved "bringing the white laboring man down to the level of the negro and the wages of labor down to rates at which white men cannot live decently." (It was assumed that Black people were predisposed to beggary and thus capable of subsisting on lower wages.) The editor explained that although "Africanization" would eventually cripple white labor throughout the entire North, its impact would be most dire along slavery's western borders: "Our state, bounded on two sides by slave states, endless sources of negro pauperism, will be made a lazar-house . . . and white labor ground to the earth by negro competition."[87]

Loyal foes of confiscation combined economic and regional themes to avow that Lincoln's policies were eroding the equilibrium between two societies that, while divergent in their racial-labor systems, were harmonious in their social, commercial, and political relations. "There is a common interest and common policy which unites the men south of the Ohio River with the men north of Ohio River," explained Congressman William H. Wadsworth of Kentucky, "and these make the western border."[88] Proclaiming that his state "belong[s] to no section," Senator Joseph A. Wright reminded his constituents that although Indiana and Kentucky are "separated by the beautiful Ohio we are bound together by ten thousand chords . . . we are essentially one

people."[89] Now the pillars of that bond, Unionism and the Fugitive Slave Law, were endangered, the former by secession and the latter by a war of slave liberation. For this, many critics blamed "Yankee radicalism" in the form of abolition and war policy radicalization, imported from New England, propagated in the "northern parts" of western states, and then thrust upon the politically moderate border and its (both real and imagined) counterbalance between Black and white, slave and free.[90] The *New Albany Daily Ledger* framed this "Yankee fanaticism" as a direct threat to "Western interests and Western pride" as well as "the welfare, peace, and safety of the white race."[91] In the words of another editor, border people opposed "indiscriminate emancipation" because these "borders of rebellion" would most feel "the actual desolations of war, from which Massachusetts, happily, is too far removed." "It is into these states," he contended, "Ohio and Illinois, that freed Negroes will most likely be thrown and not into Massachusetts."[92] Indeed, for most Lower Midwesterners, it was not simply that freedom and slavery existed on either side of the Ohio River, but that the north bank was free *because* slavery prevailed on the southern shore.

The War Department seemed to confirm this Africanization hysteria with a "contraband" relocation policy that was born into controversy. When military enlistment drives resulted in labor shortages in the fall of 1862, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton ordered that Cairo's freedpeople be dispersed across the state via the Illinois Central Railroad to assist in bringing in the harvest. Black migrants—hundreds according to Republican sources, thousands according to Democrats—fanned out of the river counties for northerly destinations. With November elections looming, the timing was ruinous for Republicans. Illinoisans had overwhelmingly rejected Black settlement the previous June. Now, following Stanton's directive, Black laborers who made their way from Cairo to towns in Illinois's interior were turned back by armed mobs. In September in Union County, wedged between Missouri and Kentucky, enraged whites attacked Black transplants; a similar scene played out in Olney the following month.[93]

Republican leaders backed the contentious policy through a seemingly contradictory emancipation-as-exclusion hypothesis. Embracing the arguments of both proslavery race science and popular sovereignty advocates, the *Evansville Journal* cited "physiology" as a reason why freed Blacks would remain in the South. "The structure of [Black] skin, hair, skull, and respiratory organs are adapted better to hot climates than to cold ones," the Republican paper reported, and these so-called biological traits were accompanied by cul-

tural ones, including a "lack of enterprise" and "habits of deference . . . to the superior race."[94] The Western Freedmen's Aid Commission, led by Cincinnati abolitionist Levi Coffin and southern Indiana reformer Robert Dale Owen, who later headed the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission, alleged that not only would emancipation compel freedpeople to stay put, it would also lead northern Blacks to migrate south to warmer environs.[95] Illinois governor Richard Yates agreed. Seeking to repeal the state's Black Laws in 1865, Yates held that despite an end to legal exclusion, freedpeople would remain in the South rather than "seek the cold climates of the North" and "face the strong competition of northern skilled free labor."[96] For Yates and others, "race-climate theory" proved integral to early support for Reconstruction measures, as nothing was so likely to prevent a Black "invasion" of the border like the extension of rights and the organization of Black labor on southern soil.[97]

Such Republicans understood that it was impossible to separate fears of racial integration from those of worker declension. For many whites, even a toehold of temporary menial wage labor risked becoming a stepping stone to Black equality and racial "replacement." Predictably, the introduction of formerly enslaved workers sparked threats of violence, especially in Democratic locales, and those who employed Black migrants drew the ire of their illiberal neighbors. In Cairo and elsewhere, Union officers noted their inability to protect newly hired "negro servants."[98] White citizens across the state also reported mass intimidation of white farmers who hired Black laborers. "In parts of this county Negroes are not allowed to work for respectable farmers," wrote a banker in Knox County.[99] Stanton took note, reminding district officers that because contraband labor was a federal program, its participants were entitled to the full protection of the government. As additional complaints arrived that white employers of contraband labor were being "annoyed and harassed by disloyal persons," the war secretary accused Brigadier General Napoleon B. Buford, who allegedly had "no sympathy with abolitionists," of not protecting Black "captives of war" out of racial animus.[100]

On a basic level, war policy pitted landholder needs for labor against the economic distress of propertyless whites and cross-class fears of so-called race mixing. In Saline County, which had voted over 85 percent for Douglas in 1860, and where Knights of the Golden Circle purportedly harassed pro-emancipation soldiers home on furlough, conflict arose between Democratic leadership and Dr. John W. Mitchell. A founder of Harrisburg and a prominent Republican, Mitchell had been instrumental in setting up a contraband camp at Independence.[101] He hired two "contraband" families in the

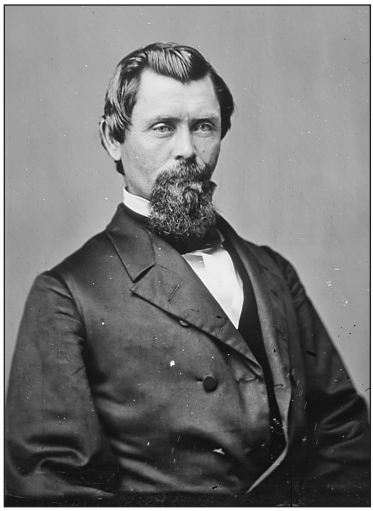


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Figure 2. Congressman William J. Allen of Marion, Illinois. Allen was one of the wartime borderland's most ardent opponents of emancipation and advocates of racial exclusion.

fall of 1862, and word of Mitchell's alien workers quickly spread through the county, prompting a public meeting in Harrisburg on October 25. Attendees, including representatives of U.S. congressman William J. Allen, drafted a set of resolutions to, in the words of one local, denounce the alleged impropriety of "bringing black labor in competition with white labor." (See Figure 2.) Citing the Black Laws and claiming the mantle of states' rights against federal military orders (as well as county rights against potential changes in state law), the crowd warned of "numerous hordes of contrabands" now descending on southeastern Illinois, then intimidated Mitchell and others to remove their Black laborers or suffer swift consequences.[102]

Despite backlash against Stanton's order, military officials in Cairo continued to permit farmers to apply and hire newly emancipated people under the condition that they receive a "fair compensation." Dozens of Union officers employed free Blacks as wage laborers and sent them northward. On the other hand, federal authorities refused to hire "contrabands" to applicants from slave states or send Black workers where they might be "liable to abduction" and re-enslavement. It soon became evident that the free states offered their own hazards of intimidation and forced banishment. Local whites threatened landholders who employed Black workers, in some cases destroying their property in retaliation.[103] Union officers complained of harassment and possible indictment in their home counties for hiring Black workers. In Union County, a mob drove off at least forty Black laborers from the farm of Benjamin Fenton, where they had been assigned to help plant 400 acres

of cotton, now grown quasi-experimentally in southern Illinois to alleviate wartime shortages. The crop never materialized because, as Fenton reported, local whites "banded together to not let them [the Black workers] remain." For federal officials in Cairo, it was the last straw. General Buford, although born to a slaveholding family in Kentucky, and despite his anti-Black reputation, sent federal troops into Anna to arrest a posse of anti-contraband vigilantes headed by a local doctor, Jeptha Randolph, which slowed but did not quell the violence.[104]

The experience of the Wiley family in Jackson County was perhaps typical. Outspoken Republicans who owned a fruit orchard near Makanda, they were the type of respectable farmers and staunch Unionists the War Department sought as partners in contraband hiring. Benjamin L. Wiley had been raised Quaker in Smithfield, Ohio, which no doubt established his antislavery convictions. In 1848, after serving in the Mexican War, Wiley moved to Union County and married the daughter of a prominent capitalist, Winsted Davie. Wiley's business ventures soon involved money lending, railroad construction, and land speculation. He also became involved in state politics. A lifelong Whig and temperance advocate, Wiley joined the upstart Republicans in the mid-1850s, becoming one of the party's first active members in Little Egypt and pioneering the party's organization in the region. He ran unsuccessfully for Congress in 1856 and served as a delegate to the Republican state and national conventions in 1858 and 1860. With the outbreak of war, Wiley used his wealth and standing to raise a regiment, the Fifth Illinois Cavalry, and personally supported confiscation, emancipation, and Black enlistment, which he viewed as an unequivocal deathblow to slavery. The war, he hoped, would "abolish the institution everywhere."[105]

Wiley's impeccable reputation notwithstanding, the family's emancipation politics led neighbors to mark them as agents of racial leveling, and they became the victims of repeated threats after retaining Black farm workers in the spring of 1863. Corresponding with her husband at the front, a concerned Emily Wiley recounted that four men on horseback visited her house late in the night and warned that her workers must leave within ten days or be forcibly removed. She did not recognize the men but took their threats seriously. Four days later she wrote her husband again: "The boys expect to leave tonight or in the morning. They have not decided which way they will go. They are afraid to go north [because] they could not get to stay and it would cost them just that much more. They are talking some of going to Cairo."[106] In all likelihood the terrorized workers on the Wiley farm and others headed

south, back toward the relative security of other freedpeople and the Union Army. Yet even the strength in numbers of the growing Black settlements in and around Cairo did not offer protection. As extensions of antebellum vigilantism, the types of extralegal nocturnal enforcers who visited Emily Wiley would morph into Reconstruction and Jim Crow–era paramilitary outfits that policed Lower Midwestern communities against both rival politics and unwelcome populations.

Meanwhile, Democrats proved eager counterrevolutionaries. They groaned that Republican ultras had instigated a "revolution in the social organization" of the states "as dark and appalling to American freemen as is that of the reign of terror under Robespierre to the French."[107] The "importation of free niggers" was not the fault of the freedpeople, whom they viewed as pawns largely devoid of political agency, but of scheming Jacobins thousands of miles from the front lines. It was a pity, they contemplated, that "abolitionists were not made black as well," so that they could be lawfully banished.[108] This revolution, anti-emancipationists argued, was not waged on behalf of common white citizens, who would bear the brunt of Black emigration, but of fat cat owners. Across the river from Missouri, the *Pike County Democrat* bemoaned that "free soil . . . which was intended for free white men, is to be forever darkened by the presence of the negro."[109] Residents of Salem, Illinois, predicted that the "inundation of this black element" would induce "the complete overthrow of white labor and the almost utter destitution of thousands of white laboring people."[110] In nearby Jonesboro, correspondents reported that while "it was once an unusual sight to see men of Anglo-Saxon blood traveling through our section on terms of intimacy with the negro . . . it is now a matter of daily occurrence. This development had allegedly demoted white men into "miserable degraded creatures" while elevating "the all-powerful African."[111] A Democratic mouthpiece that seethed white supremacy, the *Jonesboro Gazette* called emancipation a greater crime than secession, for at least disunion had been "peaceful." Lincoln, the editor avowed, was now guilty of inciting slave insurrection, which, by upending property relations, constituted a form of socialism.[112]

Sensing electoral blowback to Stanton's order, Illinois Republicans lobbied the Lincoln administration to reverse the decree, which it did in October. But the damage had already occurred. Assuring their constituents that Republicans intended to "liberate the millions of negroes and put the millions of white men in their places," border Democrats frothed at the chance to parlay fears of racial-economic replacement into party gains at the polls

that November.[113] As the economy rebounded in the fall of 1862, Lincoln sent Illinois general John A. McClernand on a tour of his native state to gauge public sentiment. The Democrat from Shawneetown identified the source of the region's dissent as primarily economic, as hostility toward emancipation fused with racialized populism.[114] Anti-elite and anti-Black, that populism contained egalitarian and anti-property impulses, so long as the beneficiaries were white farmers and mechanics, rather than the commercial and banking classes of the Northeast that, as one Democrat proclaimed, "produce nothing."[115] Cries of "No More Banks and No More Negroes in Illinois" reveal how Lincoln's opponents increasingly painted Black liberation as a scheme by financial and industrial elites to undercut "honest" (white) labor—one that drew support across classes by appealing to petty-bourgeois taxation concerns.[116] Insisting that contented slaves were being "*forced* away from their masters" at gun point by radicalized Union conscripts, the *Vincennes Sun* warned that southern Indiana was becoming "cursed with large populations of worthless Negroes" who burdened the tax base.[117] In St. Clair County, Illinois, the departure of young white men to the army led some whites to demand the expulsion of local Blacks. Declaring "The Niggers Must Go," one citizen worried that conscription would leave women and the elderly to contend with the "lazy Africans."[118]

Backlash on the border altered the course of the war and its aftermath. In fact, between the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation and the spring of 1863, owner demands for cheap labor belied a hostility toward Black migration so intense that it helped convince the Lincoln administration that a free labor program for formerly enslaved people must occur primarily within—not beyond—the South. Stanton himself predicted that "no colored man will leave his home in the South if that home is protected."[119] This concept of safeguarding freedpeople where they resided rather than relocating them northward formed the basis of federal Reconstruction policy, and conservatives would later adopt Stanton's logic toward white racial protection in its defense. Indeed, with emancipation imminent and colonization impractical, Republicans and War Democrats alike slowly recognized by late 1862 that the systematic mobilization of Blacks in the South was a vehicle for a longstanding and popular bipartisan political objective: Black containment.[120] Lincoln addressed racial-economic panic on the border in his Annual Message to Congress in December 1862. "Why should emancipation south, send free people north?," he asked. If freedpeople simply remained, "they jostle no white laborers; if they leave their old place, they leave them open to white

laborers." Speaking directly to the concerns of so-called Butternuts, as well as white wage earners throughout the North, Lincoln looked to temper the swelling apocalypticism by denying that emancipation would result in voracious resource competition or racial replacement. With or without colonization, he argued, slavery's destruction would "enhance the wages of white labor" and imbue toilers everywhere with unprecedented bargaining power over owners.[121] Whether his western armies of mechanics and small farmers believed him remained to be seen.

CHAPTER 4

Turning Black

Lincoln understood that preserving democratic government depended on retaining the political loyalty and military service of conservative Unionists like William H. Ross. A corporal in the 40th Illinois Infantry from Vandalia, Ross viewed political restoration as the superseding war aim. Grumbling that his regiment might "stack their arms, desert, or go to the Confederate Army" rather than fight for Black freedom, Ross parroted the Democratic line of racial replacement, urging his family and friends against volunteering in what he deemed a "Negro war." Even after he accepted the military logic of emancipation, Ross threatened to shoot any Black soldier in blue he was forced to fight alongside, as integrated armies and Black men with guns symbolized a degree of racial leveling to which no self-respecting white man should be compelled to submit.

Although he sympathized with defecting soldiers and more than once considered absconding, Ross nevertheless expressed a genuine hatred of the rebellion and a desire to see the war through. "A majority of the volunteers is against the president's proclamation," he wrote in November 1862, "but they have about come to the conclusion that they will have to submit to whatever Old Abe says."[1] Ross's views also softened with time, and he displayed a typical evolution from vocal resistance and sporadic desertion to toleration—one that complicates the "Union to emancipation" narrative by which white northerners came to embrace slavery's destruction, first as a strategic necessity, then as a moral good and co-equal war aim.[2] Ross reenlisted in 1864, and although he maintained to the end that emancipation had hindered the Union war effort, he also prepared to stay the course for the sake of the Union

Cause, even enrolling in the regular army after the war. Like countless other border men in blue, Ross proved a reluctant revolutionary.

Even emancipators, practical or otherwise, believed in the inequality and separation of the races, as anti-Black hysteria on the homefront both reflected and reinforced the attitudes of Union soldiers in the field. This dialectic of race and reaction intensified after Lincoln's Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation in September 1862 and continued into the following spring and summer, ebbing according to Union victories, economic conditions, and turnover within the army. Soldier views toward Union war policy varied widely. Collective attitudes can be gauged less by regiment, most of which were large and diverse bodies composed of military companies from assorted communities, than according to the social origins and political affiliations of particular companies and platoons or, at times, the influence of individual officers. Of course, those also shifted in due course. In any case, perhaps most Lower Midwestern soldiers initially opposed the measure, and many were unflinching in their resistance. Newspapers and correspondence connected battle lines and military camps to the communities volunteers left behind. As word of a "nigger invasion" spread along the Ohio River, soldier correspondence, invested with political content, both shaped and was shaped by civilian attitudes.

Most soldier letters were not explicitly political, but those with anti-emancipation substance tended to be reactive yet sincere, concerned above all with racial integration, encompassing both material questions and those of "amalgamation." Lower Midwestern soldiers also expressed trepidation over emancipation's potential impact on the ranks and the homefront, regularly conveying concern for how slavery's destruction would determine broader Union strategy. In this sense, the letters of Indiana soldier Stephen A. Miller were emblematic. Threatening to desert "if they don't quit freeing the niggers and putting them in the North," Miller warned his family in January 1863 that their community was now under siege, as Union regiments would bring multitudes of Africans "across the Ohio River into Indiana and set them free." Disavowing himself of any "nigger blood," Miller was adamant that he had not enlisted to either die for slaves or compete with Blacks for jobs. "If they let the niggers stay where they are," he determined, "I will help them through with the war." Otherwise, he and his comrades would "quit fighting on old black Abe's terms." Emancipation and the restriction of freedpeople to the South or a far-off colony was one thing; social "amalgamation" and Black people in Indiana was quite another. "It is very wrong," he concluded, "to live with the niggers in freedom."[3]

Innumerable soldiers reflexively equated Lincoln's "abolition proclamation" with eastern and urban reform radicalism and foreign republicanism, which they deemed dangerous strains of revolutionism with dire implications for their border communities.[4] Many also initially viewed slavery's destruction as militarily unsound and likely to prolong the rebellion. Warning that an expanded war "against property" would only strengthen Confederate resolve, Robert Perry Hoge of the 104th Illinois Infantry expected emancipation to demoralize border whites and infuse them with an added purpose to oppose the war.[5] The Virginia-born Hoge's anti-emancipation sentiment devolved into outright antiwar dissent after being captured in Tennessee in December 1862, and he blamed the cursed war on far-off Radicals.[6] Illinois cavalryman John J. Lynch lamented that "the aspect of the war has changed. . . . It is now instead of being one to crush the rebellion, a war, the sole object being the freedom of the negroes." With his motivation for enlisting betrayed by "wily and treacherous niggers," Lynch fantasized: "Had I my wish every nigger in the Union should be sunk in the Atlantic Ocean or else remanded back to slavery."[7] Yet Lynch, like the overwhelming majority of emancipation's fervent opponents, could not bring himself to leave the army. In the words of one discontented conservative, he and other Unionists were "between two fires"—cursed by Republicans because they remained Democrats and charged by Democrats with "abolitionism" because their armies were now actively undoing slavery.[8]

For these fretful fighting men, the greatest threat posed by emancipation was not Black freedom per se but any semblance of racial integration, which was suggestive of equality not only in social rights but also in access to resources. Writing from Mound City, Illinois, in October 1862, Jasper Barney approved of slave liberation as a military measure. The war would never conclude unless the Union seized "the main root of evil and confiscate all [Confederate] property." All the same, Barney was "not in favor of freeing the negroes and leaving them to transfer and mingle among us." Only emancipation combined with colonization, he determined, could prevent an intolerable scenario of social contact and economic competition.[9] Similarly, Indiana soldier P. W. McCreery explained to his family that the worst aspect of the war was not combat but living among so many "black devils" in the South. To McCreery, a mixed-race society was yet another feature of southern backwardness. He eschewed any Black migration northward that might southernize his home state, even predicting that Indiana citizens would "slay them as fast as they can come."[10]

Anti-emancipation sentiment, combined with the many pro-Lincoln sol-

diers in the field who could not vote, translated to Democratic gains that fall, wiping out Republican majorities in Indiana and Illinois. Ohio might have experienced a similar fate had its state elections not been held in odd years. In Little Egypt, victorious Peace Democrat William J. Allen had bested two War Democrats in the interim congressional election in May and defeated Republicans now attributed such "Butternut victories" to racially liberal war measures, particularly Stanton's contraband order. One Republican in Lincoln's former district blamed his party's losses on "Negroes from the south [being] taken into our state." Although the *Chicago Tribune* was probably correct in asserting that Republicans lost because Union soldiers in the field had not been able to vote, Democratic warnings that freedom for Blacks would result in white deprivation proved effective, and region-specific fears of race mixing, which both converged with and at times deviated from economic self-interest, also played a role. As historian Bruce S. Allardice argues, "African American settlement convinced many voters that Lincoln had fundamentally altered the popular war for the Union into a crusade for racial equality."[11]

Maximizing their newfound advantage, Democratic officeholders converted legitimate class anxieties into racial panic. Time-worn Jacksonians and Douglas men made constitutional and legal arguments against emancipation, but most immediate and sensational were those that prophesied social upheaval, specifically the so-called crash of excess labor *that was also* Black labor about to be unleashed on the Lower Midwest. In a resolution passed in early January, Illinois's Democratic-controlled legislature denounced Lincoln's Proclamation as "gigantic usurpation" of federal power that would invite servile insurrection "without example in civilized warfare." Members charged the president with transforming the war for conservative aims into a "crusade for the sudden, unconditional, and violent liberation of 3,000,000 negro slaves; a result which would not only be a total subversion of the Federal Union, but a revolution in the social organization of the Southern States." They warned that the consequences of that "social revolution" would not be relegated to the South, but would prove "far-reaching," with sweeping repercussions in the communities and workplaces of southern and western Illinois.[12] From the vantage of white people on slavery's border, a war against slavery was, in effect, a war against free white labor.

On December 23, 1862, just days before the Proclamation was to take effect, congressional newcomer William J. Allen used an address before the House to speak for "the white people of Illinois" and decry the twin evils of "contact and competition." Allen hailed from Marion and occupied the seat

formerly held by John A. Logan, and his district encompassed the Black refugees amassed at Cairo. The Tennessee-born Allen forswore radicalism in both sections, branding secessionists and abolitionists "co-conspirators" in instigating the war. Warning his constituents that Little Egypt was being "invaded" and "destroyed," he reiterated that white southern Illinoisans did not want Black people as slaves, nor would they welcome them as neighbors. As Allen saw it, Stanton's measure breached both the state exclusion law of 1853 and the will of the electorate. Deeming it his obligation to prevent any intercourse between white citizens and former slaves, whose presence was "violative of every right, civil and political," and whose admittance as laborers would "strike down the wages of white people," Allen proposed a resolution to achieve racial purity through deportation. The working men of his district were "willing to compete with each other," he explained, "but will never consent to competition with stolen negroes." Suggesting that Black people were simultaneously too lazy to labor but sufficiently vigorous to undermine white employment, Allen concluded, "Southern Illinois must be the home of either white men or black men, they cannot dwell together."[13]

In a public letter published the following month, Judge Andrew D. Duff of Franklin County excoriated "abolition despotism" under the auspices of protecting "South Illinois." Military authorities had arrested Duff the previous August for publicly speaking against the war, and some Republicans accused him of being a member of the secretive peace organization, the Knights of the Golden Circle. Now, he questioned the practices of so-called "military necessity" that involved freeing slaves and "kidnapping" white men. Warning that the racial order was on the verge of turning upside down, Duff denounced the Lincoln administration's shifting war aims, as well as upstate "negro worshippers" for whom the Union Cause had become the promotion of racial equality and Black migration. Like Allen, Duff mocked the idea that there was or could ever constitutionally be "free Americans of African descent," particularly in a state that had legally enshrined the superiority of white men. Above all, he resented that he and other members of the worthier race were being taxed to liberate, feed, and, in some cases, educate and employ a subhuman underclass. In other words, Allen, Duff, and other Peace Democrats viewed white manhood as underpinning all other community relations and buoying existing hierarchies, partly by concealing class difference. They believed that if saving the Union meant upending the so-called natural order while white men paid the cost in treasure and blood, then the nation was simply not worth preserving.[14]

THE "GENERAL STRIKE" OF ENSLAVED people threatened to produce a "hate strike" of retaliatory soldiers. As political support for emancipation in the Lower Midwest bottomed out in late 1862 and early 1863, Democrats and Republicans alike predicted that the measure would incite whole regiments to defect.[15] Although it is critical to distinguish between day-to-day soldier complaints and outright revolt, myriad reports suggested that anti-emancipation dissent risked transcending individual discontent by swelling into a mass movement. Reinforced by the anti-Lincoln press, including the prominent *Chicago Times*, which claimed that the transition to "nigger war" would shatter the western armies, border state volunteers reported acute demoralization and constant threats of individual and collective desertion.[16]

Indiana soldier Andrew Bush believed in the Union Cause and was not a shirker. He assured his family, "I don't want to come home without the war closed, with the rebels driven into the Gulf of Mexico and the Negroes into hell." Regardless, Bush feared that Lincoln's Proclamation was undermining the war effort and would soon lead "Illinois and Indiana and Ohio" to "take their soldiers homes." "If I had thought that it was the idea to set the Negroes all free, they would not have got me to act the part of a soldier in this war," he confessed. "I don't think they are human."[17] Unlike Bush, George F. Chittenden of the 16th Indiana Infantry personally supported emancipation. But he also saw Black liberation as having a profoundly disheartening effect in the ranks. "If [the feeling] at other places is like it is here," Chittenden explained, "we might as well acknowledge the Rebel Confederacy."[18] Writing in early 1863, Carlos W. Colby of Alton explained that emancipation had exposed a political rift within his unit. "There is a great deal of dissatisfaction in the army," Colby conceded. Although his comrades had always been willing to endure the war's hardship, he made clear they now seemed on the brink of mutiny. "As long as there was nothing to do [with slavery] the grumblers could bear it," Colby explained, "but now it is Nigger and Old Abe all the time. They are not going to fight to free niggers."[19]

Although there is a danger in overextrapolating the letters and offhand commentary of enlisted men, numerous high-ranking Union officials echoed the fears of Chittenden and Colby. Southern Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio officers reported widespread anti-emancipation discord, with some resigning their commissions in protest.[20] Others who sensed that emancipation was driving up desertion rates issued regimental resolutions, implemented newspaper bans, and ramped up arrests and court martials to stem the tide of discontent.[21] Lincoln was intimately familiar with the conservative Unionist

views of his native region. One of the delays in issuing the Preliminary Emancipation had been, as he wrote to Charles Sumner in August 1862, an abiding fear that "half the officers would lay down their arms and three more states would rise up."[22] Conservative Republicans, such as Caleb B. Smith of Indiana, predicted that emancipation would cause border free-state soldiers to turn against the war.[23] General James A. Garfield was so concerned that his men in the Army of the Cumberland were being "corrupted" to desert by those on the homefront that he resorted to sending clandestine agents into southern Indiana and Illinois to infiltrate antiwar circles and break up morale-depressing networks.[24] John A. Logan and John A. McClernand, Little Egypt's two most prominent generals, opposed the order and worried privately about its potential impact on the army.[25]

Such fears were realized when soldiers who never accepted the war's liberalizing aims quit in acts of group and individual protest. What historian Jonathan W. White describes as a "massive desertion problem" was most evident in two Little Egypt and overwhelmingly Democrat regiments: the 109th Illinois Infantry, largely from Union County, and the 128th Illinois Infantry, whose soldiers hailed from Williamson, Franklin, and Saline counties.[26] Roughly seven hundred men of the 128th Illinois absconded in the fall of 1862 and winter of 1863. The 128th gained a reputation for its antiwar posture, and higher-ups discharged the unit's officers and disbanded the regiment on April 4 for what General Lorenzo Thomas called "an utter want of discipline."[27] Although there is no irrefutable evidence that anti-emancipation convictions were the cause of the regiment's breakdown, the timing of the desertions and the fact that participants hailed from Little Egypt, with most born in the slaveholding South, led observers to conclude that it was politically motivated.[28]

Meanwhile, the 109th Illinois had been suspected of disloyalty since the fall of 1862, when a military commission forced Captain John J. McIntosh of Jonesboro to sign an affidavit declaring that he was not a "rebel sympathizer."[29] The regiment's adjutant, James Evans, published regular reports on camp life in the *Jonesboro Gazette* in which he described himself and his comrades as "equally opposed to disunionists, whether in the guise of law-defying negro-stealing abolitionists, or open and avowed secessionists."[30] On December 31, the Army of the Tennessee issued Special Order No. 58, stating that the 109th was showing "indications of disloyalty" and ordering the unit to be disarmed and confined to camp limits.[31] Indeed, hundreds of soldiers deserted in the weeks proximate to the Emancipation Proclamation, roughly 348 by the time the unit was disbanded in early April.[32] Regimental records

reveal that several officers, including the lieutenant colonel, were discharged for "encouraging [their] men to get paroled."[33] Desertions declined after January 1863, but so did the state's rate of volunteers, which strongly suggests that while emancipation compelled some men to leave the army, it convinced far more to avoid it.[34]

Keen to paint anti-emancipation politics as treasonous, the Republican press reported that Illinois's "deserter regiments," particularly their officers, were not mere opponents of wartime policy but crypto rebels who had attempted to go over to the Confederacy. The *Evansville Journal* termed the men "Secesh natives," inclined to side with the South's "Butternuts" over fellow soldiers they deemed "Black Republicans" or "Abolition Democrats."[35] Branding the regimental disintegrations a "disloyal plot," the *Chicago Tribune* agreed that the deserters were "true southern men" whose pastimes included "catching and returning runaway contrabands" and "swearing at Abolitionists." The paper even alleged that many defectors had entered the army as rebel agents and had never been sincere to the Union Cause.[36]

Meanwhile, back in Union County, those who knew the dissenters as neighbors and family members defended the soldiers' loyalty and portrayed them as political scapegoats—victims of a radicalizing war whose devotion to the nation was secondary only to the desire to protect their homes and livelihoods from the hordes of former slaves who were certain to stream northward.[37] Republican editors certainly exaggerated the disloyalty of southern Illinois deserters, who were motivated more by anti-administration than anti-Union feeling. But the scale of anti-emancipation discontent, along with a window of conspicuous soldier walk-outs, reveal how such men perceived liberalizing war policy as a threat to their material existences and an affront to their identities as westerners and white men.

Desertion also fomented violence on the homefront. In Illinois, where exclusion laws were still in effect, anti-emancipation Democrats employed extralegal retribution against both Black freedom seekers and white Republicans. They removed free Black residents, enacted community racial restrictions, and proposed that new Black migrants be lawfully subject to public lashing.[38] The *Chicago Tribune* reported that bands of deserters, armed and driftless, were attacking Union men in the streets of Vandalia and other towns.[39] Assaults on antislavery recruiters, such as at Mt. Carmel, Illinois, in 1863, and against Black soldiers in Zanesville, Ohio, and New Albany, Indiana, in 1864, also highlighted the supposed threat of disgruntled former soldiers.[40] In Anna, Illinois, where a citizen was murdered for assisting federal

authorities in locating Union Army defectors, district commander Jacob Ammen carried out mass loyalty oaths and requested two hundred troops to put down a potential antiwar uprising in April 1863.[41] Williamson County, in the heart of Little Egypt, where a mob had reportedly attempted to expel the free Black community of Skelton Town, saw a series of politically motivated murders, including the December 1862 assassination of James Baker, whom the killers charged with exposing deserters.[42]

By the spring of 1863, a syndicate of bandits and renegade soldiers-turned-highwaymen led by George Aiken terrorized local Republicans and robbed indiscriminately. A former sheriff and quartermaster in the 128th Illinois, Aiken quit the army following the Emancipation Proclamation, recruited a posse of criminals and truant soldiers, and conducted a terror campaign throughout southeastern Illinois. Unlike postwar night riders, who often concealed themselves with hoods and masks, members of the Aiken Gang painted their faces black, leading to great public curiosity about the "Copperhead" bandits who "disguised themselves as negroes."[43] In one infamous murder in White County in March 1864, witnesses described the perpetrators as "not Negroes, but white men blackened." These "blackened [but not Black] demons" were part of a murderous minstrelsy that capitalized on fears of "becoming Black" or being relegated to a status comparable or subservient to that of Black people.[44]

Yet the vast majority of conservative Unionist soldiers did not abscond or become outlaws, nor did they become "abolitionists," practical or otherwise. Most were men like Indiana officer William Orr, a native of Virginia who favored "the restoration of the union as *it was*." When emancipation was enacted, Orr predicted mass desertion and threatened to defect. Although he remained in the service, Orr's hostility toward both antislavery hardliners and Peace Democrats never dissipated; he avowed that he was not fighting to "free the darkeys," but to establish "an honorable peace on the basis of Union."[45] Gideon Viars of Gallipolis, Ohio, asserted that the turn toward an "abolition war" had redoubled his commitment to the Democratic Party, leading to his unwavering support for George B. McClellan in the 1864 presidential election.[46] The same was true of Edwin Royce of Huntington, Indiana, who reiterated his loyalty but believed that true Unionism meant leaving "every Nigger in bondage" in a return to the status quo antebellum.[47]

Resistance to Black enlistment was also widespread. Even to many Republicans, the possibility of Black men as soldiers and the revolutionary change that entailed was initially unthinkable. When free Black Ohioans petitioned

their Republican governor, David Todd, for the formation of a Black regiment early in the war, he reminded them that he represented a "white man's government" and rejected their bid.[48] After Black enlistment became federal policy in 1863, Ohio's future Republican governor, Major General Jacob D. Cox, backed the measure because he reasoned that, of all the races who could be made soldiers, Black people were "most easily ruled."[49] And when Black men inevitably proved themselves capable soldiers, their successes were, according to George M. Fredrickson, "often seen as the result of their submissiveness—which in a military context could mean the same thing as susceptibility to discipline."[50]

But it was Democrats in particular who interpreted the incorporation of "the common greasy nigger" into the army as "revolutionary" and the first step toward amalgamation.[51] In fact, scholars have argued that because the logical conclusions of Black military service were racial integration and some measure of civil rights, northern whites exhibited greater hostility to the arming of Black soldiers than to emancipation.[52] As Fredrickson acknowledges, "It was difficult to ask a man to fight for a nation without recognizing his right to live in it."[53] Staunchly opposed to all forms of "race mixing," the *Indiana State Sentinel* viewed Black soldiers as yet another manifestation of economic rivalry, warning that "the laboring white man who dreads competition at home will now . . . encounter it if he enlists in the army."[54] Though the link between soldiering, citizenship, and economic competition was not lost on them, white Lower Midwesterners devoted more energy to opposing emancipation because they viewed Black freedom as the more immediate threat. After all, while enlistment would seemingly keep freedpeople in the South and perhaps export some northern Blacks southward, slavery's destruction threatened to compel droves of former bondsmen into the free states.

To that end, some who endorsed Black soldiering did so out of racial Malthusianism or the idea that emancipation would lead to "negro extinction." Many of the same whites who argued that emancipated Blacks would "die out" in a free labor system held that Black military enlistment would reduce the number of white soldiers conscripted or killed. As concluded by Reverend J. M. Sturtevant, president of Illinois College, if emancipation would result in "not the amalgamation of the races, not an internecine war between them, but the inevitable extinction of the weaker race," Black enlistment would expedite this process.[55] Although Andrew Bush had opposed emancipation, he grew to accept Black soldiers as both punitive against secessionists and a means of racial extermination, a way to "put an end to the black population."[56] Mary

P. Caplinger of Williamson County, Illinois, was equally blunt in her assessment: "I want them to be put before all the whites. If there is any to be killed let it be them, for they are the very cause of this war."[57] There were, however, well-recognized trade-offs to such a position. Bestializing Black soldiers as "a monkey race" and "the pet lambs of abolitionists," the *Cannelton Reporter* warned southern Indianans that while Black enlistment might save white lives on the battlefield, it also risked eventual "social, political, and civil equality" between the races.[58]

On the other hand, Republicans attempted to allay racialized scarcity unease by defending Black soldiers on both moral and practical grounds. The *Cincinnati Gazette*, for one, argued that former slaves in uniform posed little threat to white workingmen and sought to separate interracialism within the army from economic anxiety on the home front by announcing that "any laboring man who fears negro competition can present himself at one of our recruiting offices and secure permanent employment."[59] Looking to disassociate distress over Black soldiering from that over job competition, Republicans in Gallipolis, Ohio, avowed, "There is not now, and never has been, a white man in the free states . . . that ever lost a day's wages because of negro competition." They lauded the Union's "Black heroes," who had proven themselves in combat despite lesser pay, greater personal danger, discrimination in the ranks, and prejudice on the homefront that cast them as social parasites or economic adversaries.[60] The *Evansville Journal*, meanwhile, mocked the notion that Black men were able marketplace competitors yet somehow unfit for military service. Their position, one editor suggested, was akin to that of white northerners who characterized freedpeople as ignorant and improvident—"too lazy for a free laborer"—but somehow industrious enough to threaten white jobs. That trope would prove integral to the specter of the Black strikebreaker well into the twentieth century.[61]

WAR INCREASINGLY TRANSFORMED LOWER MIDWESTERN soldiers into conditional emancipators. Embodied most famously by John A. Logan, the notorious "slave catcher" turned stalwart Republican, countless fighting men leaned into their roles as the saviors of the republic and, secondarily, the gravediggers of chattel slavery, in many cases shedding their fealty to the Democratic Party. War Democrats once dedicated to safeguarding bondage, including Virginia-born southern Illinois soldiers like Cyrus T. Cochran, slowly accepted "evacuating Niggers" as damaging to the rebel cause.[62] Those

with mild pre-war antislavery attitudes, such as James B. Woollard of Salem, who was born and raised in the South before joining the 111th Illinois Infantry, grew firmer in their convictions and came to believe, in Woollard's words, that the quickest path to Union victory lay in "declaring freedom to every slave and putting them in the field to help put down the rebellion and to obtain their own freedom."[63] Troops used the pejorative "turning black" to describe this transformation of personal and political identities. As a "loyal Democrat" soldier from Posey County, Indiana, explained, "I am no Abolitionist, but I am in favor of crushing this rebellion, let it cost what it will."[64] Such a process reveals that, though the war was caused by sectional impulses that long radiated from the pro- and antislavery hotbeds, four years of conflict and social upheaval also *created* sectionalism in the amorphous middle between slave and free states.

Self-defined "border people" found themselves thrust into these sectional and antislavery postures. At least one southern Illinois regiment, the 62nd, raised from Lawrence, Crawford, and White counties, issued resolutions supporting emancipation and condemning disloyalty on the homefront.[65] Gradually adopting the view of "any means to restore the Union, nigger or no nigger," Illinoisan Daniel M. Points saw slavery as an inevitable obstacle to Union victory and came to view himself as a reluctant emancipator.[66] Private John Lucas Harding of the 7th Indiana Infantry also initially opposed emancipation, calling Lincoln's Proclamation "the worst thing that has happened to the North since the outbreak of the war." Yet, by mid-1863, Harding had grown to not only embrace slave liberation and Black enlistment but also accept some measure of Black political rights.[67] For western veterans such as Harding, loyalty came to be based not on racial views or party affiliation but on support for the war, including one's willingness to wage war on slavery. Although not an abolitionist per se, years of military struggle compelled Major James A. Connolly of the 123rd Illinois Infantry to identify with the controversial label. A native of Charleston, where antiwar Democrats clashed with Union soldiers in March 1864, leaving nine dead, Connolly explained his philosophy: "While in the field I am an abolitionist."[68] With the "general strike" in full effect and strategic momentum shifting toward Lincoln's armies, it was ever more apparent to Harding, Connolly, and others that they could not defeat the Confederacy without embracing the war on slavery. The social rootedness of the chattel system and the mighty advantages it lent the rebel war effort drove even anti-abolitionists to become "practical," if not entirely at ease, liberators.[69]

Although soldier views on slavery remained distinct from those on race, conservative Unionism proved flexible among Lower Midwesterners as it eroded in the Border South. While proslavery Unionism became untenable in Kentucky, resulting in a "belated Confederatism" that would define the state's postwar politics and public memory, conservative Unionism was malleable in the lower free states, leading to a surge in Republican politics and a collective memory centered on the Union Cause.[70] Indeed, by 1863, Midwestern troops, Democrats included, regularly "Confederatized" the Border South, exoticizing slaveholding regions and bifurcating the West of Jackson and Clay into "loyal" and "disloyal" blocs. They increasingly defined "treason" as not only secession but slavery itself. The experience of Ohio volunteer George Henry Weeks, who rejected the proslavery Unionism he witnessed in Kentucky and grew to promote the military and moral necessity of Black freedom, became typical. "I am not much of a nigger man," Weeks confessed, "[but] I like to see a man have his rights be he ever so black."[71] Jacob Behm, an enlistee from Mt. Carmel who would be killed near Atlanta in 1864, also came to espouse "the necessity of emancipation." "The only way out of this war," he reasoned, "is by blows aimed at the heart of the rebellion."[72] Although emancipation was met with more hostility in the lower free states than in any other part of the North, and civilians and soldiers were more likely to accept Black liberation "as a *war means* rather than a *war aim*, as strategy rather than policy," Lower Midwestern soldiers and the triumphant armies they comprised proved wildly effective—if sometimes uneasy or dissenting—instruments of social revolution.[73]

Rather than abolitionists in the making, Lower Midwestern soldiers largely came to support transformational war measures out of military necessity while also resisting racial integration and equality. Writing in January 1863, Illinois soldier Thomas F. Miller confessed that while the Proclamation had caused "considerable disturbance" in the army, and he did not wish slaves to be "truly free," he and his comrades saw no other way to defeat the Confederacy. A native of Parke County, Indiana, serving in the 29th Illinois Infantry, Miller was unapologetically hostile to Black rights and racial integration yet perfectly willing to "free the last slave" if it meant toppling the rebellion.[74] Captain John C. Dinsmore of the 99th Illinois Infantry spoke for most border Unionists in describing his mid-war attitudes on race and emancipation. The Pike County soldier endorsed the confiscation of rebel property and characterized slavery as "the root of evil," yet remained vehemently opposed to "nigger equality."[75] Trumpeting the righteousness of loyal opposition, Dinsmore contended that if being a strong Democrat and antipathy toward "the

Abe Lincoln gang" constituted "Copperheadism," then "three-fourths of the men in this army are Copperheads."[76] Rather than racial incorporation, which he viewed as the long-term Republican aim, Dinsmore backed colonization, as anything less than separation would result in the total breakdown of critical social distinctions. "I am not in favor of freeing the negroes and leaving them to run free," he proclaimed.[77] Like most border whites, Dinsmore believed emancipation necessary, but not if it triggered an influx of Black people into southern and western Illinois. By the middle of the war, Lower Midwesterners increasingly echoed some version of the antislavery southerner and self-proclaimed defender of the interests of poor whites Hinton Rowan Helper's 1861 plea for a "white America": "Death to Slavery! Down with the Slaveholders! Away with the Negroes!"[78]

Winning the war at all costs while retaining the racial-social order meant adopting various forms of local and community-level exclusion as the long-standing fantasy of Black deportation and colonization evaporated. Despite being hyped as a compromise position, there was nothing remotely practical about the costs, logistics, and political conditions required to administer millions of people and transport them to another part of the world. Proposed colonization schemes involving Black resettlement in Panama and Ile-a-Vache, off the coast of Haiti, were less serious policy considerations than they were politically opportune talking points for Republicans who wished to avoid connecting emancipation with the northward migration of freedpeople.[79]

Such projects, of course, came to nothing. Changing political conditions—the success of Black soldiers and the failure of Black "invasion" to materialize in the summer following the Proclamation (owing in part to federal labor programs and the recruitment of Black troops)—led to a marked decline in even "speculative and theoretical" colonizationist thinking.[80] Expansionist designs boosted settlerism in the West, largely replacing the international colonization chimera. However, white people along slavery's now-eroding border largely opposed a colorblind approach to homesteading, which they believed would promote racial integration, and resistance from Midwestern whites who wanted Black freeholders confined to the South, would shape the creation of the Southern Homestead Act.[81]

These fluid racial politics spurred changes in the cultural production of race. The pamphlet *Miscegenation*, published anonymously by Democratic journalists in New York in late 1863 but widely believed to be written from the perspective of a radical abolitionist, endorsed a supposedly new Republican philosophy that held that race mixing (rather than race "purity") would

lead to the creation of a superior race.[82] The concept built on "amalgamation" dread, or the idea that Black "traits" were genetically dominant and that any "admixture" would ostensibly "pollute" or even "drown out" alleged "white" virtuousness. Rooted in the Latin words *miscere* (to mix) and *genus* (race), "miscegenation" caught on among border whites, who were intensely aware of their position on the "front line" of racial mixing, heightening the sense of an impending "war between the races."[83] Lower Midwesterners vigorously adopted the language, with Republicans charging Democrats with being the true "miscegens" for supporting the mingling of Black and white under the slave system, as evidenced by the number of "saddle-colored" people in the South.[84] Democrats, meanwhile, suggested that because the toil-averse "African race" was productive only when driven by a master-manager, not only would emancipation result in the "abolition of African labor" and the wealth that labor created, but any mixture of "white" and "African blood" would dilute the energy of the superior race.[85]

More critically, editors revived and expounded on the old theory of racial replacement. They explained that attempts to "equalize the black and white races" would destroy "Anglo-Saxon identity" and displant white people with "human mongrels in which the characteristics of the white race would be absorbed into the brutal instincts of the negro."[86] Despite vague warnings that race mixing would undermine the white work ethic, the spring 1864 miscegenation pandemonium was, by and large, a species of "Black scare" divorced from material rationality, a fact that surely limited its political impact. As historian Forrest G. Wood concludes, the idea that Republicans were actively promoting the reduction of the white race, contrary to their most basic economic considerations, was "too fantastic" even for the most ardently white supremacist Democrats.[87]

Conservatives exploited these new formulations of race to both fulfill white supremacist delusion and subvert class discontent. Slavery's champions had long argued that human bondage and "white republicanism" were bulwarks against European-style socialism and that any hint of reform was a harbinger of revolution.[88] Anti-emancipation diehards breathed new life into this tactic, one that a wide spectrum of anti-radicals would continue to use against socialists, labor militants, and civil rights activists by linking "Black Republicans" to "red republicans," Black scare to red scare. Warning that the Republicans' "communistic" takeover of white southern property would lead to earth-shattering changes in social, not just material, relations, conservatives linked hard war policies with fears of immigration, urbanism, and, most

frequently, racial pluralism. Proslavery authors who had long compared antislavery radicalism to French Jacobinism and warned that the natural culmination of emancipation was revolution—who contended that abolitionism *was* socialism because it attacked private property—now saw confiscation as forging a "Robespierrean highway of tyranny and anarchy."[89] Such pro-property absolutism trickled down to Indiana soldier Hardin Edwards who maintained that any war-based principles to liberate "a damned Negro" was, in reality, simply an order to "take other people's properties."[90]

Pro-war inertia generated its own politics of property in the service of the Union. As Lower Midwesterners grew to accept emancipation, notions of loyalty became intertwined with political identities and contested understandings of borders—of North and South—but also with views on land, resources, and proprietorship. Because confiscation and emancipation, as either moral imperatives or military necessities, rested to varying degrees on the idea that human property in the service of rebellion (and the profits it generated) was unlawful and morally wrong, war proponents accused peace factions of treason for refusing to concede the illegitimacy of slave property and, in some cases, the land rights of those in active rebellion. Adding a loyalty caveat to longstanding abolitionist arguments, Republicans charged Democratic leaders with defending slave chattel that was used for insurrectionary purposes—of defending *rebel* property.[91] In other words, intensifying loyalty politics provided cover for conditional yet growing antislavery sentiment among conservative Lower Midwesterners; loyalty also proved a cudgel for them to attack the defiant minority who refused to accept military emancipation. For countless free-state border people, for whom emancipation was an unfortunate but practical necessity, the continued defense of slavery's constitutionality during wartime became seditious as acknowledging the illicitness of property in man grew synonymous with the Union Cause.

PERSISTENT COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY SENTIMENT, however, represented more than the protection of slave property. It was also often indicative of a broader and more coherent antiwar outlook that advocated peace through negotiated settlement. Republicans labeled outspoken critics of the Lincoln administration's war effort "Copperheads," and their views were disseminated throughout the Midwest by the *Chicago Times*, the *Illinois State Register*, and the *Dayton Empire*. Represented in Congress by William J. Allen, Lewis W. Ross, and James C. Robinson in Illinois, Jesse D. Bright and Daniel Voorhees

of Indiana, and Ohioans Clement Vallandigham, Alexander Long, George H. Pendleton, and Samuel S. Cox, these Peace Democrats anchored their politics in Jacksonian notions of anti-urbanism, anti-pluralism, and anti-modernism. They espoused racial replacement theories and exploited "western" identities to oppose imagined "black Yankees" from the Northeast and the Great Lakes, avowing that Lower Midwestern soldiers would not become willing agents of racial revolution. "Had the Central, Western, and Border states been consulted," Cox declared, "the proclamation never would have been issued; and by their help it never can or shall be executed."[92] In fact, this brand of "western sectionalism" portrayed the southern portions of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois as a discrete and racially homogenous society whose cultural and economic interests aligned as much with the slaveholding South as with the free labor North. This core idea, shared by Copperheads and non-Copperheads alike, of the Lower Midwest as a bastion of "honest" white toilers would long perpetuate the "rural heartland myth."[93]

Regionalized antiwar sentiment also linked anti-elitism and racially qualified material grievances to shifts in state and national power. Prominent western sectionalists such as Indiana Democrat James Addison Cravens insisted that, unlike the abolitionized "northern portions of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois," the "lower free states" were part of their own identifiable "section" whose shared politics with Kentucky were antithetical to the extremist poles of North and South.[94] Indiana Democratic Thomas A. Hendricks, who blamed liberal war policies on "the fanaticism of New England," complained that Yankee politicians and profiteers were enriching themselves "on the blood of Western men."[95] Centered on the belief that the most valuable members of a society are those who produce tangible wealth, perhaps especially foodstuffs, Peace Democrat populism appealed to both Jeffersonian agrarianism and new forms of western anti-monopolism. Asking "Western Farmers: What Are Your Interests?," Democratic editors cautioned that the agrarian enterprises of the Midwest were at the mercy of the eastern capitalists who were responsible not only for the war but also for ostensibly directing its liberal policy.[96]

Copperhead praxis involved appealing to the bread-and-butter concerns of white toilers to agitate against emancipation. Staking out positions to the left of the Republican Party on certain matters of political economy, including Lincoln's Revenue Act of August 1861, which imposed a federal income tax to pay for war, Copperheads argued that the war was widening the class divide at the expense of white labor. Viewing the wartime tax system as both unjust

and insufficient, an unidentified wage earner from Montgomery County, Ohio, challenged "fellow workingmen" to guard against their "own ruin and enslavement." Writing in Vallandigham's *Dayton Daily Empire*, he decried wartime prices of household essentials, including shoes, textiles, flour, coffee, meat, and cordwood, surmising that "nearly all" of the material burden of war fell on "the laboring man and the mechanic." He reminded his readers that consumer goods made up a far larger share of the laborer's earnings, and their rising cost was both a result of the war and represented a regressive tax that affected workers more directly than any tax endured by the wealthy. Despite their claims to the contrary, he argued that, overall, "the rich do not pay any more war tax than the poor." In addition to reducing the costs of the war by ending it, the author favored making the war's burdens more equitable by taxing not only incomes but also land, estates, and other assets.[97]

Copperheads in the Northeast exploited Republican policies to position themselves as friends of organized labor, but in southern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, where industrial workers were rarer or nonexistent, they assumed a largely agrarian posture. Highlighting the classed nature of the Conscription Act, enacted in March 1863, in which any man who possessed $300 in greenbacks, "filched from the *people*," could evade military service, anti-drafters regularly threatened conscription officers, killing two in Rush County, Indiana, in June 1863.[98] The following summer, they took aim at the Lincoln administration's Contract Labor Law, which legalized labor recruitment abroad with U.S. businessmen subsidizing immigrant passage. The law became fodder for the Copperhead press in part because it promised owners that their new foreign-born workers would not be conscripted into the army. Meanwhile, Democratic media assured native-born workers that emancipation would result in freedpeople becoming an "army of strike-breakers" eager to undercut or replace white labor. This sense of white worker persecution informed the headlines of a German paper, which read simply, "Abolition the Worst Enemy of the Free White Laborer."[99]

Yet anti-emancipationism as a subset of class war was not a mere function of Copperhead propaganda. Democrats and dissenters across a wide spectrum described emancipation as having pitted capitalists and abolitionist officers, on the one hand, against common whites. Predicting that emancipation would most impact the "class" of enlisted men who would be forced to "compete with slaves for their daily bread" after the war, Democrats in Union County avowed that the interests of "poor soldiers" were contrary to those of effete easterners and "abolitionist generals." Observ-

ers described these distinctions sartorially, with plain-clothes rank-and-file western troops counterposed against "white-gloved Yankees" who made bombastic moral proclamations while sporting "gold-laced saddle bags" and supported revolutionary policies while becoming "pecuniarily dependent on this 'most righteous war.'"[100]

Residents of Wayne County, Indiana, also viewed the turn toward "abolition war" as a direct attack on the "poor folks" of the West. One citizen warned a soldier that Black people were "getting as thick as blackberries" on the homefront and urged him to stop fighting a war that was flooding the labor market.[101] Such critics were adamant that anti-emancipation sentiment should not be conflated with peace politics or pro-Confederatism, as slaveholders comprised their own form of "aristocracy." According to an editor in Cairo, although southern Illinois was not traitorous, its residents were simply "unwilling to compete with black men for labor or position."[102] Like so many Lower Midwesterners, these detractors eschewed emancipation not simply because it threatened the South's labor system or freed a detested people; it was repellant because it was materially detrimental to the peons of the master race. Even downstate labor reformers, who enthusiastically backed Lincoln and conscription, worried that the war was generating "apathy" toward class issues, all while capitalists consolidated newfound power.[103]

Indeed, war proponents also highlighted the wraith of "negro competition." War Democrat John A. McClernand explained the pro-emancipation, anti-Black position of Illinois's War Democrats in the fall of 1863: "We want no intermixture of white blood with theirs; we wanted them to be free men, not as citizens. . . . [We] wanted to help him not equalize him with the white man and bring him into competition with white labor."[104] Republicans, meanwhile, continued to maintain that slave liberation would ultimately benefit white laborers by retaining former bondsmen in their "natural" environments while also drawing Midwestern Blacks back into the South. In this framing, Reconstruction, like Black soldiering, was actually a conservative policy certain to reduce the probability of interracialism, lessening what William J. Allen termed the dreaded combination of "contact and competition." As Illinois Republican and future co-author of the Thirteenth Amendment Lyman Trumbull reiterated, the Republicans remained "a white man's party." "We are for free white men," he announced, "and for making white labor respectable and honorable, which . . . can never be done when negro slave labor is brought into competition with it."[105]

These appeals to embattled farmers and western identity sowed the seeds

of Grangerism and later agrarian populism.[106] Yet, with few exceptions, emancipation's opponents forwarded not a coherent material analysis but a vaguely classed rhetoric designed to incite racial panic. Although conservatives' views on race and federalism were largely sincere, their end goal in opposing the war was to forge or retain all-white communities while reinvigorating commercial relations with the slave South. As such, the Democratic emphasis on white racial solidarity obfuscated the sources of legitimate economic grievances, effectively promoting anti-Black racism as a substitute for class war. The *Illinois State Register*, for instance, apprised that Black freedom would forge a "new social order" with workingmen on the bottom rung. Yet it identified Republican elites, and their policies of "Africanization" and "Negro poison," not private property and the drive for profit, as the source of "white slavery."[107] Although the *Jonesboro Gazette* spoke to the economic concerns of white laborers, the paper cited "competition" rather than exploitation as the basis of injustice by continuously summoning "race war," "servile massacre," and the dreaded ghost of John Brown.[108] Staunchly opposing "amalgamation" or any "close intimacy with the blacks," the Democratic press warned that emancipation would transform southern Illinois into a "dependent colony"—a workhouse of corporate and landholding monopolies—and "a land of refuge for runaway negroes and outlaws."[109] In effect, this brand of right-wing populism identified and assailed features inherent to capitalism—wealth aggregation, corporate influence, fickle markets, and the unfair treatment of laborers—but cast primary blame on the phantom of "negro competition" rather than the economic system.[110]

WHETHER AMONG SOLDIERS OR CIVILIANS, war supporters or counterrevolutionaries, slave liberation, and, to a lesser degree, Black enlistment ultimately proved highly conditional. Anti-emancipation hysteria peaked in the summer of 1863, receding with time and Union victories, and as a consensus developed around slave manumission in the South combined with some form of Black exclusion at home. Most white border people initially endured rather than embraced slavery's destruction. They came slowly to tolerate it as a war measure, if not champion it as a war aim. By the latter part of the war, the Lower Midwestern majority abided—and in many cases enthusiastically advocated—emancipation and limited legal rights (devoid of social equality and integration). Bearing witness to slavery had converted one soldier from Metropolis, Illinois, who reported after Lincoln's reelection that "the negro

question is becoming settled pretty fast" among soldiers. Though he opposed Black voting and other social rights, he sincerely hoped that "the day is not far that [Blacks] may all be free before the law."[111]

This conservative yet malleable Unionism and the acceptance of liberalizing war policy in southern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois as it was being rejected in the Border South heightened sectional distinctions and forged divergent postwar commemorative traditions on either side of the Ohio River even as the stigma of disloyalty continued to plague the lower free states and its regiments. Led by the *New York Tribune*'s series of "letters from Egypt," written by correspondent Ralph Meeker, the Republican press continued to characterize southern Illinois as the seedbed of disloyalty.[112] Conflating antiwar politics and Democratic partisanship with outright treason, the *Chicago Tribune* ran regular stories alleging that the region was the home of the pro-Confederate Knights of the Golden Circle, and thus operating as a "fifth column" for Jeff Davis.[113]

Some officers attempted to set the record straight. As commander of the 31st Illinois Infantry, formerly led by John A. Logan and recruited from his old congressional district, Colonel Lindorf Ozburn countered Republican accusations that meaningful numbers of southern Illinoisans held pro-Confederate sympathies. Rather, Egyptians such as his men in the "Dirty-First," so nicknamed for its reputation for hard living and hard fighting, were merely expressing loyal dissent against the "black-hearted fanatical Abolition party," which had altered the original purpose of the war. It was not simply that his men opposed slavery's ruin but that they feared the social consequences of emancipation in their own communities. Writing to Andrew Duff, Ozburn also estimated that roughly 95 percent of his men supported Democratic-proposed changes to the state constitution, particularly its designs to shore up existing Black exclusion laws. Although he would endure the Lincoln administration's sharp liberal turn that fall, Ozburn coursed a different path than Logan, who slowly aligned himself with the Republicans. True to exclusionist principles, Ozburn resigned his commission in February 1863 just as mass desertions broke out in the 109th and the 129th Illinois regiments, both from Little Egypt, and canvassed as a Peace Democrat leading up to the 1864 presidential election.[114]

To Ozburn's point, "poor whites" proved a useful foil for the pro-war majority, as Republicans diagnosed racial prejudice as the sole product of "white trash" and Democratic "traitors." Rather than scrutinize their own social class or political parties, pro-war commentators commonly decried

extreme racial prejudice among "Butternuts," "Copperheads," and certain subsets of the white laboring class (Democrat-voting Midwestern farmers and urban Catholic workers) while trafficking in their own forms of racialization, including labeling Black people as "niggers" and "shades."[115] As historian V. Jacque Voegeli explains, wartime Republicans "attempted to reduce racism with . . . adroit appeals to class prejudice, charging that only the Irish and "poor whites" were guilty of Negrophobia."[116]

Despite being marked as inferior by regional outsiders, Lower Midwestern soldiers also deployed the "white trash" epithet against the white southerners they encountered, often conflating the term with secession or some whiff of treason.[117] On the one hand, *any* attack on racial discrimination represented an acknowledgment of the moral problem of white supremacy. On the other hand, shifting the locus of anti-Black racism onto "poor whites" rather than political or class allies, much less social and legal institutions, reduced the "Negro problem" to an issue not merely *of* but *by* the working class.

In some sense, that "class" was, by the middle of the war, gaining consciousness "for itself," spurred by an uptick in proletarianization and labor unionization throughout the North, beginning in the summer of 1862.[118] Small pockets of organized wage earners—former "mechanics" and "producers" who increasingly identified as "workingmen"—decried stagnant wages, high consumer prices, unsafe working conditions, and lower pay for women in war industries. Wartime labor shortages gave workers newfound bargaining power. Trade assemblies emerged, and union membership rose throughout late 1863 and early 1864, often through raced appeals. As historian Noel Ignatiev posits regarding the broader history of U.S. class formation, "The working-class movement reflects the influence of capital; but that is not to say that particular [racial] tendencies within it are the result of intervention by individual capitalists or groups of capitalists."[119] As such, national labor organizations drew on free white labor tropes perpetuated by politicians and editors but not necessarily foisted on them by party elites. In tracts such as *White Slaves*, published by the Workingmen's Democratic Republican Association of New York, workers across the North inverted the language of proslavery polemicist James Henry Hammond by presenting the Confederacy as anti-labor and warning that chattel slavery, by stunting demand for wage labor, ensured the enslavement of white men. Pro-war opposition to "peace men"—those who demanded "the Union as it was"—included the idea that compromise with traitors would make white men socially, politically, and economically subservient to the Slave Power.[120] Workers employed a similar language along slavery's border, where

crowds at emancipation and Union League meetings carried placards that read "Emancipation and Free White Labor."[121]

Owners in the borderland responded to worker self-activity, including miners' strikes in southern Illinois and iron molders' walkouts in Evansville and Louisville, with counter-organization and anti-labor laws.[122] Bosses distributed misleading employment ads in the hope that "hungry, penniless, helpless" war refugees from the South might expand the labor pool, drive down wages, and eliminate strike actions.[123] Citing their "rights as employers" against the growing power of the Iron Molders' Union, organized in 1859, southern Indiana foundry operators formed the Iron Founders' and Machine Builders' Association of the Falls of the Ohio in Louisville in October 1863. Their employees, meanwhile, saw owner associations as a new form of "combined capital," with employers seeking to "increase their power by a grand combination of combinations" that would dictate workplace conditions and shape the law in their favor.[124]

That fear was realized in Illinois, where legislators passed the LaSalle Black Laws through a bipartisan vote in response to a series of spontaneous coal strikes impacting production at the Illinois Valley Coal Company, owned in part by *Chicago Tribune* editors and Republican Party kingmakers Joseph Medill and Horace White. The notorious laws banned union attempts to influence workers "by threats, suggestion of danger, or other means," with "other means" interpreted broadly. According to sociologist Cedric de Leon, the legislation essentially charged striking workers with unlawful conspiracy while "simultaneously constructing combinations of capitalists as individuals bearing inviolable property rights." It was the origin of "right to work."[125]

Yet owner intransigence in the pursuit of divide and conquer kindled new forms of worker solidarity. Though "negro invasion" alarm led many wage earners to conclude that the war was being fought "to enable abolitionist Capitalists to transport Negroes into the northern cities to replace . . . workers who were striking for higher wages," workers associated across trade, ethnic, and even racial lines.[126] Illinois labor advocate James Andrews reminded readers that worker "parasitism" was based not on racial condition but on one's relationship to organization. He maintained that the intraclass enemies of "true men" were anti-union "servile toadies," or that the "sneaks, scabs, and pusillanimous go-betweens" would rather make short-term inroads with employers than long-term gains alongside fellow workmen. The key to building the labor movement, Andrews alleged, lay in appealing to self-interest and "dissuading parasites from clinging to a system which secures no good

to them." This strategy of pinpointing class enemies and urging unionists to "talk, reason, and convince" with non-union workers—of, in effect, embracing class over racial unity—contained an often implied yet devastating critique of Black exclusion.[127]

Owner power and oscillating fears of labor competition constantly threatened these tenuous class alliances. Although mounting concerns that the end of the war would result in "thousands of surplus workers" entering the borderland should have been—and often was—a recipe for race-making and violence, class consciousness and activity could subordinate racial hatred. For example, there was a growing sense by the middle of the war that the producers of the "Western States" were following the lead of New England by becoming "disconnected with agricultural pursuits." Although military mobilization provided proletarianized workers a greater degree of structural power by constricting the labor pool, this movement off the land jeopardized what Andrews described as the "healthy equilibrium" of wage earners. But rather than racial exclusion, he called for shop floor organization and a shorter workday, as well as homesteading in the West, with the elimination of Indigenous people and land effectively mediating class conflict.[128] The message resonated: "There is a revolution going on among the mechanics of America," one Louisville iron molder cheered, "and I hope the day is not far distant when all trades will be united in the purpose of protecting one another in their rights."[129]

Federal officials responded to emboldened workers with force as part of a war within the war that presaged later confrontations between labor and capital. In fact, the army exerted its greatest authority in labor relations in the borderland, where labor systems overlapped and political loyalty was more contested.[130] In the spring of 1864, Union officers used soldiers to crush a machinists' strike in Louisville and suppress a "strike wave" of tailors, blacksmiths, and shoemakers in St. Louis, resulting in General William Rosecrans's notorious General Order No. 65, which outlawed unions in war-related industries and forbade workers from counseling one another during wage disputes.[131] Lincoln's armies, the liberation agents of chattel slaves, had become in the hands of zealous Union generals, an anti-labor instrument for the subjugation of "wage slaves."[132] Meanwhile, Louisville union locals countered that September by forming the ambitiously titled "International Industrial Assembly of North America," which called for, among other proposals, the establishment of an eight-hour workday. By the end of 1864, according to historian James P. Grossman, "the most intent demands for national labor unity came from the Ohio Valley."[133]

Although support for Lincoln's war was strong within this emerging House of Labor, Peace Democrats continued their attempts to harness worker energy toward the antiwar movement. They circulated reports of economic replacement leading up to the fall 1864 elections, especially among exceptionally oppressed social groups, including "poor white trash" and immigrant workers, who were marked with "the taint of blackness."[134] These accounts were often aimed at the Irish, whose relative poverty perhaps rendered them especially susceptible to scarcity fears. Irish victimhood and uncertain racial statuses—the recognition among "not quite white" immigrants of the premium that American society put on whiteness—led many to eagerly adopt white supremacy. The *Dayton Daily Empire*'s frequent stories of racial replacement appealed directly to the Irish, suggesting that subordinate categories of white workers—those who were "becoming white" or otherwise outside the dominant racial group—were at greatest risk of being "degraded to the level of the African." Prefiguring Democratic arguments against Reconstruction, editors also warned that the federal government was forming "freedmen associations" across the Midwest for the express purpose of "importing negroes to compete with you for labor." Even if white men, and the Irish specifically, *were* able to retain their jobs, they would reportedly be forced to "work alongside of [Blacks] and at the same wages." Racial integration and "free competition" were, in other words, a fate little better than wholesale destitution, and they were worth halting the war to prevent.[135]

Most white workers, however, did not take the bait. As historian David Montgomery notes, although urban laborers remained divided between the two parties, and wartime strikes and protests gave the impression that disgruntled wage earners were turning into Peace Democrats, relatively few industrial workers (and no labor organizations or leaders) "went Coppery," even in the Ohio Valley. On the contrary, Lincoln made dramatic gains between 1860 and 1864 among urban workers in Cincinnati, Louisville, and St. Louis.[136] In Evansville, one of the most proportionally immigrant cities in the nation, former working-class Democratic strongholds saw large majorities for Lincoln.[137] In rural Little Egypt, the 1864 elections and the midterms of 1866 revealed a region that, through identification with the Union Cause and its military and political leaders, pivoted sharply toward the party of Lincoln.

Republican outlets had long hoped that southern Illinois would repudiate its "Sucker principles" by "turning Yankee" in matters of education, business, and politics.[138] Now, even small and tenant farmers in deep southern Illinois, counties which Lincoln had lost by roughly eighteen thousand votes in 1860,

broke for the incumbent president by the slimmest of majorities in 1864, prompting Republican papers to declare "Egypt Redeemed!" The most striking reversal occurred in Johnson County, where a "political revolution" led by the wildly popular John A. Logan helped Lincoln's support skyrocket from 2.5 percent in 1860 to 76.4 percent in 1864.[139] For the vast majority of Lower Midwesterners, Unionism and free white labor—age-old racial aversion combined with hostility to the planter class and devotion to an expansionistic nation-state—proved deeply resonant, superseding fears of racial reconfiguration brought on by the war's policies.

Peace Democrats and anti-emancipation diehards ultimately failed to transform "hatred of profiteers and capitalists into a hatred of the war itself," as historian Philip S. Foner put it.[140] Even so, their narratives of racial and class victimization—of white producers on the border absorbing the cost of freeing their future economic rivals—foreshadowed certain themes within anti-Reconstruction politics and the agrarian populism and labor reform of ensuing decades. Indeed, the region's decisive Unionism did not fundamentally alter prevailing racial ideas and preferences. Lincoln's reelection may have dealt a fatal blow to the dreams of western sectionalists, but so-called Copperheadism did not vanish so much as evolve. Countless Lower Midwesterners transmuted its racial and populist elements into critiques of Radical Reconstruction and calls for economic reform amid the economic downturn of the 1870s; they then employed "western" regionalism to lead the charge toward Blue-Gray reconciliation. Moreover, rising inequality gave added valence to the notion that African American freedom—or at least Black workers "competing" with white men—constituted a form of "white slavery." For many whites, the solution was to reject all forms of "intermixing." The preservation of political and economic liberty, they reasoned, required the lower free states to remain the province of the "superior race." And if the state decriminalized racial inclusion, then downstate communities would be forced to act on their own. Sacred whiteness would have to be defended with the ballot and, if necessary, the bullet and the lynching noose.

In the end, the borderland's response to emancipation was one of continuity and change. The exigencies of war had converted innumerable white soldiers and civilians into agents of freedom. Although the result was a frustratingly fleeting alliance well short of interracial solidarity, collective endeavors and joint interests—the overthrow of the South's planter class—brought countless white farmers and mechanics into some functioning partnership with enslaved people that would have been unthinkable just months before.

Yet while self-liberators pressured military and political officials toward a more encompassing jubilee, facilitating what became a social revolution, the vast majority of Lower Midwesterners understood the war not as a revolutionary experience but as a conservative and restorative one.

In most cases, begrudging acceptance or even enthusiasm for slavery's destruction did not translate to support for racial equality, as the real and perceived social consequences of emancipation drove many to devise new safeguards against what they saw as an impending racial-economic threat. Countless border whites may have "turned black" in the face of wartime contingencies, but few were "made black" (or unmade their "white" identities) as integrationists. Fearing that emancipation's aftermath might "darken" the Midwest into a place of numerous and fluid categories like Mexico or Brazil, most remained committed to what their war leader (and proponent of Indigenous extermination) William T. Sherman endorsed as "the noncommingling of the races."[141] At the same time, while proletarianization, concurrent with emancipation and Black migration, enhanced white workers' conceptions of slavery's former border as a "dumping ground" of race mixing and economic competition, commercial-industrial development wrought by the war spurred a miscellany of worker mobilization. This wide-ranging backlash against corporate capitalism through agrarian revolt and, especially, industrial unionism soon established a basis for transcending the color line through class consciousness and struggle. A new countervailing power—a comprehensive labor movement—had begun to emerge.

PART III

The Ghost of Negro Competition

On a muggy August night in 1876, one year before the Great Railroad Strike, Union veteran William Haller stood on a dry goods crate in downtown Cincinnati and delivered a searing indictment of the Ohio and Mississippi Railway to a thousand onlookers. Political passions burned even hotter than the weather as Haller detailed his "unmitigated contempt" for the capitalist system, including how it exploited "honest" toilers and pitted them against "cheap" labor. Attacking operators for importing workers from the South to replace striking railmen, he explained that owners had recruited "bummers, thieves, and pimps to invade a sister state . . . for the purpose of cheating their employees."

A former abolitionist who recognized the importance of class-based overtures across the color line, Haller argued that supplanting strikers with non-union reserves constituted a modern-day "slave trade" in which capital and its pliant recruits moved freely across borders while less mobile workers saw their attempts at organization stifled at every turn by law, custom, privatized police, and, if need be, the brute force of the state. Despite the Workingmen's Party's flawed view of the "negro question," this move to delegitimize certain workers based on their union rather than racial status represented a critical break from earlier patterns of regional exclusion. The notion of "degraded" labor was so synonymous with non-white skin that many white workers saw no critical distinction between the two, yet Haller and other socialists drew on a familiar rhetoric of invasion, replacement, and restriction to oppose the introduction of wage "competitors" not primarily because they were Black, but because they were "cheap."[1]

This class-first approach defined one faction of the short-lived Workingmen's Party—the first Marxist political organization in the United States. Although it remained marginal outside the heavily German industrial hubs of Cincinnati, Louisville, and St. Louis, the WPUS and its successor, the Socialist Labor Party, ran candidates across the region.[2] These half-party/half-union socialists were part of an organizational tissue that connected radical worker projects between Reconstruction and the end of the century. The trade union (Marxist) element within the party "penetrated deeply into the U.S. labor movement," and their principles of class struggle through permanent unions rather than utopianism or electoralism were adopted by the early American Federation of Labor.[3] Moreover, the Workingmen's Party was perhaps the first interracial working-class organization along slavery's former border. Headquartered on Vine Street, in the city's German core, the WPUS organized wage earners across ethnic, racial, and "skill" lines and hoped to "receive the earnest support of every laborer, mechanic, and artisan in Cincinnati," including "every man who is out of employment and every man whose salary is inadequate."[4] Socialists proved willing, at least in some instances, to challenge the color line to strengthen the class confederation.

The role of African American Peter H. Clark, whom Haller recruited into the socialist cause, illuminated the movement's interracial potential, as well as its limitations.[5] An educator and civic leader, Clark had been an active Republican, serving as a party delegate to the 1876 National Convention. Yet he was deeply influenced by the militancy of Cincinnati's German workers. Clark became increasingly disillusioned following Rutherford B. Hayes's victory, as the party of Lincoln abandoned the South's Reconstruction governments. On December 10 that year he spoke at Arbeiter Hall before the Cincinnati Workingmen's Society on "Wages' Slavery and the Remedy." Four months later, he renounced the Republican Party and declared himself a socialist with a grand speech at Robinson's Opera House, where he addressed the shared oppression of Blacks and poor whites by proclaiming solidarity between tenant farmers in Ohio and Ireland, miners in England and the Hocking Valley, and industrial workers in Paris and Cincinnati.[6] Clark explained that while as a Radical Republican he had "advocated the emancipation of the colored man," only as a socialist could he "advocate the emancipation of the laborer." He likewise decried the rise of "cheap labor" and distinguished between so-called virtuous wage earners and almspersons, Black and white, who were no longer organizable. In doing so, Clark aped white republican rhetoric that viewed non-producers, in this case, the city's lumpenproletariat, as politically unreliable. Alas,

he avowed that widening inequality had led to the emergence of a new class, neither wealthy nor "wage slave," who "lack the mental, moral and physical force to maintain themselves" or federate with other workingmen.[7]

Although Clark already possessed a reputation as "Cincinnati's most famous colored citizen," it was only after his socialist conversion that he performed his most insurgent act: that of a Black man denouncing racism *and* capitalism before a largely white audience.[8] Combining elements of Marxism and labor republicanism, Clark enthralled spectators in Cincinnati, Louisville, and Jeffersonville, Indiana, and served as a representative to the Ohio state Socialist Labor convention. On July 22, during the largest general strike in U.S. history, Clark gave a speech that was "probably the first widely publicized proposal for socialism by a Black American."[9] In it, he identified the wage system as one of exploitation that used precarity and worker-on-worker "competition" to sow fear. Clark made clear that capitalism depended on the existence and division of "a great army of workers, who hang forever on the ragged edge of pauperism." The capitalist's assurances of "prosperity" and "abundance" masked the reality of permanent wage labor with disunited workers "underbidding each other in the labor market." Leaning into self-help philosophy, Clark maintained that poverty's grind had produced a mass of "ignorant rabble," particularly among formerly enslaved people. The promise of meritocratic upward mobility was the capitalist's sales pitch, but for every worker who "breaks[s] through the hindrance of poverty" to achieve affluence, Clark reminded, "there are ten thousand who fall." Even those who transcended the wage-earning condition were often undone by overproduction, speculation, and, ultimately, depressions that increasingly typified the economic system. Summoning Lincoln, he predicted that in twenty years every railroad in the country would be collectively owned and operated as a public utility. But that change would not come through trade unionism alone. Only the economic democracy and revolutionary unity of socialism, he declared, could remedy the scourge of scarcity fears and conflict exacerbated by the capitalist order.[10]

Clark's rise within the organization was a radical step—one that was ultimately aberrative. Despite asserting that "the interests of black and white laborers are the same," party officialdom was not, according to Philip S. Foner, concerned with "the issues of the final phases of Reconstruction in the South, the organization of Black workers, or even the recruiting of Blacks into the party."[11] Foner rightly critiques early socialist commitment to antiracist principles and their failure to seize Reconstruction as an opportunity to

build interracial worker power. However, as suggested by historian Lorenzo Costaguta, Foner neglects how the socialists' approach constituted a striking departure from popular racial attitudes and practices in Cincinnati, Louisville, New Albany, Evansville, and Belleville and Collinsville—all places that had experienced decades of racial violence through riot, expulsion, or segregation. To be sure, the socialists' official "color blind" policy—an oversimplification of Marx's historical materialism that did not translate into the practical tools necessary for interracial organizing—proved functionally ineffectual in a society in which race played such a paramount role in shaping economic structures. A white-led organization running an African American for political office in the borderland was nevertheless a momentous achievement. And that Clark was Black held special significance to many of his white comrades. When the party nominated him for the state superintendent of schools, the Cincinnati *Emancipator*, a socialist weekly, explained that Clark, more than any other socialist, embodied "the contrast between laborers and capitalists" because he hailed from "the proscribed race, whose sorrows made the United States the synonym of robbery and murder throughout the world." Clark's nomination, therefore, offered "the finest vindication of the claim that the Workingmen's Party is a purely cosmopolitan organization."[12]

Even so, the interracial economic democracy Clark envisioned proved elusive. The path to the Great Railroad Strike—and the seeming cusp of a national labor movement, if not a proletarian revolution—was a crooked one. Shaped by longstanding discourses of racial-labor "invasion," "replacement," and "degradation," labor's great internal problem lay in white workers' characterization of fellow wage earners as adversarial rather than organizable. With the Reconstruction Amendments and the overturning of state Black Laws, African Americans in the Lower Midwest gained citizenship, due process, and the right to vote and hold political office. However, with the war economy declining, economic slumps between 1865 and 1896 fertilized new manifestations of scarcity and anti-Black hysteria. Throughout the region, racial-economic panic led scores of white workers and small farmers into (and in many cases back into) the Democratic Party, putting them at direct electoral odds with agrarian freedpeople in the South. Beginning with the founding of the American Miners' Association (AMA), the war era seemed to offer hope for new forms of class consciousness predicated on greater inclusion across "skill" levels and social backgrounds. But rather than making common cause with former bondsmen, the AMA and its intimations toward a wider affiliation of labor disintegrated in 1867, and its remnants attached to the bud-

ding National Labor Union (NLU), the country's first national federation of unions, whose leaders were largely hostile to the Black rights revolution in the postwar South. The "cheap labor" of which Clark spoke became, to countless whites, code for "negro competition."

Economic restructuring and Black migration after the war spurred many white people to double down on their racial identities. With "free" no longer correspondent to "white" labor, they made increasing distinctions between "white" and "black" work.[13] The Midwest played a particular role in this development. Britt E. Halvorson and Joshua O. Reno contend that the region "was central to the moral reclaiming of whiteness during the Reconstruction era, as regional tropes covertly valorized white independent labor while devalorizing forms of labor that came to be associated with the South."[14] On slavery's border, even *after* slavery, legions of white workers remained conditioned to view free Blacks as threats to their jobs, as well as to white women, white property, and white community. The industrial form originated by the AMA and carried forward by the Knights of Labor would later influence the United Mine Workers of America and its success in unifying diverse groups of workers, yet craft unionists largely adopted racial exclusion, in many cases creating their own cultures of anti-Blackness. That narrowness and the class collaboration it aroused, embodied eventually by "skilled" workers within the American Federation of Labor, provided unions with bourgeois legitimacy while sapping the broader class struggle of revolutionary potential.

Although Greenbackism and Populism offered alternative—if panacea-like—visions of a more democratic economy, agrarian radicalism also remained highly segmented by race. At the same time, with the end of state-sponsored exclusion, white communities responded to racialized labor scares through local, institutional, and extralegal means. Anti-Black prejudice and class disorganization proved mutually reinforcing, as racial violence turned workers against one another. Historian Alonzo M. Ward argues that this "war against the Black worker" in the postwar Midwest saw working-class "consciousness" amount to "a new form of racial exclusivity."[15] Ultimately, what historian Noel Ignatiev calls "the acquiescence of white workers in the system of white skin privilege imposed by the bourgeoisie" helped stifle an expansive working-class movement; it also reflected and reinforced new forms of racial restriction—across counties, communities, and workplaces—in the wake of emancipation.[16]

Most important, elites responded to any semblance of interracial worker power with the full weight of their resources and authority, which were far

greater than that of organized toilers. Democratic leaders perpetuated the notion of "white men besieged," weaponizing African American migration; their Republican counterparts mostly depicted freed people as "good" workers but vilified other manifestations of "cheap labor" associated with non-Anglophonic Europeans and Chinese. The popular media response to northern labor militancy was an unremitting red scare, with the 1877 strikes and Clark's Workingmen's Party portending what the Republican *Evansville Journal* called "the great tidal wave of communism."[17] Even the ostensibly pro-labor *Evansville Courier* explained that while Greenbackers wished merely to reform laws within the system, the WPUS was a "communistic" element that sought "a complete change of government as well as our social system and relations" and must be stamped out as an example to would-be revolutionists.[18]

White owners also proved far less reluctant—and far better equipped—than farmers and laborers to organize as classes and harmonize their interests across the North-South divide, using their status as "border" men to reinforce a highly gendered culture of white sectional reconciliation that would peak at the century's turn. Owner hegemony, which appeared at times to be little more than a racial consensus between white capitalists and white workers, was deeply informed by the region's political and cultural legacies of exclusion, including notions of racial borders that transcended class lines. Ultimately, capitalists came to view a labor movement divided by skill *and* race as a manageable threat. With "invasion" as a backdrop, white identity and anti-Black racism divided workers, weakened the labor movement, undermined progressive electoral coalitions, and undercut public provisions in the Lower Midwest in the decades after the War of the Rebellion.

White racial solidarity and capitalist domination were, however, only part of the story and belied striking examples of interracial counter-counterrevolution. Like the New South as described by historians C. Vann Woodward and Edward L. Ayers, the New Borderland—after the repeal of state exclusion laws—saw alternative moments of Black-white possibility that defied practices of increasingly localized racial restriction.[19] Socialism, populism, and industrial unionism received Black farmers and workers, typically not on equal terms, but in greater real and proportional numbers than their counterpart institutions of professional-class whites. Indeed, organized labor proved a site of both exclusion, reflecting and reinforcing broader cultures of racial restriction, *and* integration, often outpacing the rest of white society. These movements—or, more aptly, moments—constituted the "almosts," "near misses," and "what might have beens" of the Reconstruction and Gilded Age border-

land, as a succession of short-lived but significant labor organizations represented—to varying degrees—countervailing powers against racial division.

These immediate chapters explore how postwar labor organization reflected and challenged prevailing ideas about racial exclusion. They reveal a melding of social and economic anxieties in the post-emancipation era, as Black mobility combined with proletarianization to trigger new forms of racialized scarcity fear and anti-Black, border-oriented politics. Workers and owners negotiated various contested and contingent racial "arrangements." Although, by some form of interracial cooperation, organized "workingmen" broke new cultural ground, operators' divide and conquer tactics often reinforced the idea of Black toilers as "cheap" or "natural" strikebreakers. Moreover, white workers' fear of downward mobility and being forced to "compete" with Black labor continued to shape the construction of race and belonging north of the Ohio River after the war. Support for racial inclusion and African American political equality existed alongside condemnations of Radical Reconstruction, resentment toward freedpeople, stereotypes concerning the mental or physical inferiority of Black people, white preference and priority, and sensitivity to the so-called incursions of non-white labor. Put simply, though they often drew on familiar exclusionary discourses and practices, by promoting class-first models to resist corporate capitalism—models that too often ignored the racialized nature of the U.S. capitalist system—industrial unionism and nascent socialism offered compelling challenges to the borderland's legacies of racial exclusion.

CHAPTER 5

The Ghastly Shadow

The end of war ushered in both exultation and fear. Sensing a "growing injustice" in the economy, countless Union veterans pinpointed Black migration as responsible for their unemployment or declining bargaining power.[1] Labor agitators, meanwhile, hoped that "emancipation" might overspread the industrial sphere, frustrating "the power of capital" as it had broken the slaveocracy.[2] However, most white workingmen came to view Reconstruction not as a potential vehicle for working-class empowerment but as a needless diversion of resources and political clout. To them, the protection of freedpeople beget the abandonment of the same heroic white toilers who had suppressed the late rebellion. It was a tragic misapprehension.

This simultaneous pushback against both Black people and white owners was rooted in changing notions of dependency, both quantitative and psychological. As David Roediger contends, "The Civil War and emancipation removed the ability of white workers to derive satisfaction from defining themselves as 'not slaves' and called into question self-definitions that centered on being 'not Black.'"[3] With the war wound down, Democratic elites exploited these clannish impulses, simultaneously accelerating racialized scarcity fears and anointing themselves the protectors of white wage earners from what they promulgated as an impending Black takeover. "The white worker shall not be sacrificed and trampled in the dust in order to elevate to social and political equality," the *Cairo Daily Democrat* declared. The editor argued that unlike white men, whose superior intellect afforded them greater capacity to bargain and refuse, Black workers were "unable to withstand the power of capital and will bring down wages to a price at which white men cannot live."[4]

Emancipation's diaspora further challenged racial identities and recalibrated workplace relations across borderlands. Although many owners perpetuated racial aversion through white-only hiring practices, others welcomed Black migration—or, more precisely, an expanded labor pool—even as they stereotyped freedpeople as "inefficient, unsuitable, and unstable" and excluded them from "skilled" and supervisory positions.[5] White workers, deeply exploited in their own right yet primed to fear "negro competition," honed their own segregationist patterns at work sites, within labor organizations, and in community spaces, reinforcing the exclusionary practices of white society as a whole. Aggrieved Union veterans believed that Black would-be competitors owed them a debt for the role that the workingmen of the North had played in securing emancipation—part of the cult of the white veteran and the co-optation of emancipationist memory in the service of white labor.[6]

White mobs from Cincinnati to St. Louis, some led by former Union soldiers, attacked freedpeople or blocked them from holding political meetings.[7] Discerning trouble in southern Ohio and Illinois on "the nigger question," one editor explained that the region's wage laborers and those whom elites slandered as "poor white trash" would continue to suffer losses in jobs and wages. "Compelled by poverty to compete with these blackamoors," he predicted the eventual rise of a "Poor White Trash" party, presumably anti-Black and economically populist, that would unite poor whites North and South who did not wish to live among Black people or contend with Black labor.[8] No such party emerged, yet Democrats continued to predominate during the postwar era among embattled white urban workers in rural "Butternut" areas that "were not sharing in the rapid economic growth of the times."[9]

Republican "bloody shirt" loyalty politics, with their manipulation of wartime passions, also bred intra-class conflict. Equating the union cause with the Union Cause, party stalwarts in Evansville avowed in 1866 that the eight-hour movement should be guided by "loyal men" and not the "new Copperhead masquerade" of Democrats. Conjoining concepts of "free," "honest," and "loyal" labor, they charged their "Jeff Davis loving" opponents with operating "in the disguise of workingmen's friends"—disloyal to both country and workers.[10] In fact, the Republican success in monopolizing Union identity combined with other wartime social and economic changes to realign the region's party politics. The association of federal victory with western Republican leaders, including Lincoln and Grant, led counties almost universally Democratic in the late 1850s to flip Republican by 1864 and remain two-party

competitive for the rest of the era. In Johnson County, Illinois, for example, Lincoln won less than 3 percent of the vote in 1860; in 1864, he won more than 75 percent, and Republican presidential candidates carried the state into the 1880s.[11]

Despite the absence of class alignment in party politics, the source of industrial unionism in the borderland began with economic transformation in southwestern Illinois. In St. Clair County, which had become the first part of southern Illinois to feel the full impact of increased "proletarian globe-hopping," or the mass migration of foreign-born agrarian people from the periphery to the core of capitalist development, miners leveraged the contracted wartime labor market to counteract a host of injustices.[12] German immigrants had first arrived in the 1820s and '30s as small artisans and family farmers, often bringing antislavery politics with them, and Belleville soon became known as *kleine deutsches Athen in Amerika*.[13] Gustav Koerner, a veteran of Germany's 1848 revolutions, emerged as a local political leader and, by the 1850s, head of the newly established Republican Party, helping author its 1860 platform. Republican and pro-war sentiment prevailed (Lincoln won nearly 54 percent of the county in 1860). By the conflict's end, St. Clair County was the fifth most populous in Illinois, and a center of both labor activity and industrial manufacturing.[14] Boasting the second-most number of steam engines and the sixth-most total capital in the state, the city soon produced nails, bricks, glass, hosiery, iron castings, agricultural equipment, and beer, earning the nickname "The Stove Capital of the World."[15]

The region's trademark resource, however, was coal, and the first attempt at national organization among miners occurred in Belleville in January 1861. Aided by an uptick in railroads, mills, foundries, factories, and river shipping, Belleville, where the carbon rock was near the surface and extracted cheaply, soon became the largest yielding field in the Midwest's top bitumen producer.[16] As mine owners began organizing to reduce pay rates, colliers grew increasingly concerned about "the growing power of capital" and began coordinating in turn.[17] What became the American Miners' Association began as a series of letters written by Daniel Weaver, an English-born labor reformer and former Chartist, and published in the *Belleville Democrat*.[18] AMA leadership, including Weaver, Thomas Lloyd, and Irish American Martin Burke, shared a naïve belief that worker exploitation stemmed from the greed of individual employers rather than the base exploitation of capitalist relations and that workers, who far outnumbered owners, would inevitably come to control legislative bodies and elect the union's leaders. Yet, in an embryonic class consciousness,

they imagined their alliance encompassing workers across occupation and "skill" levels, and the AMA increasingly comprised German miners, who also came to hold a majority of the officerships.[19] English or German, cautious or militant, the unionists felt that only mass organization could, in Weaver's words, promote "the general welfare of our class" and prevent "the insatiable maw of Capital" from devouring "every vestige of Labor's rights."[20]

Weaver's "emancipation" did not restrict by color or national origin. Fearing nationalism, like sectionalism, would mostly impede worker organization, he advocated that "there be no English, no Irish, Germans, Scotch, or Welsh" within the federation.[21] Invariably, this vision of an "all-inclusive union" gave rhetorical and governing priority to workers of European ancestry, who constituted the bulk of the local working-class population. Although Weaver was by all appearances an ethnic and racial egalitarian, the AMA's pursuit of cultural, linguistic, and religious variegation was also innately pragmatic, as a direct response to the anti-union measures of mine owners. Machinating differences between immigrant groups, operators used Germans, rather than Blacks, to split the ranks between Anglo and non-Anglophonic miners during the early 1861 strikes. It was not effective. As Weaver reported, "The Germans, now, are joining us by thirties and forties. . . . Our cause is theirs; our interests are identical." This early insistence on fuller incorporation of workers, both a personal choice among union leaders and a practical necessity for the organization's survival, set the tone for the industrial form and relative inclusion of later miners' unions.[22]

In addition to low pay, the miners' constitution cited a host of grievances related to workplace safety: the prevalence of explosions, roof collapses, deadly fires, and poison gases, all worsened by a deadly lack of ventilation. Emanating from the borderland, the AMA saw considerable growth in late 1862 and early 1863. Associationists held their first conventions in Springfield, Illinois, in 1863 and Cincinnati in 1864 as membership spread north and east to Braidwood and LaSalle in Illinois, then Massillon, Ohio, and Tioga County, Pennsylvania.[23] Leaders divided the burgeoning federation into districts, with convention delegates proportional to membership numbers, and the *Weekly Miner*, edited by John Hinchcliffe, soon became the union's news bulletin.[24] AMA activists coordinated a series of walkouts and striker relief efforts beginning in December 1862, encompassing both the southern and northern coal fields from Belleville to Morris. Organizational expansion translated into action as the union's center of influence shifted eastward (the 1865 and 1866 conventions were held in Cleveland).[25]

The AMA threat to profits and production engendered swift reaction. Although Belleville's citizens largely backed the Association, mine operators denied the union's legitimacy and slandered members as foreign radicals, constitutive of a "thriftless, improvident class"—as, in effect, lazy troublemakers.[26] Coal dealers argued that the union was inimical to the public good and that its unreasonable demands were certain to raise consumer prices and darken the overall economic climate. Such objections were often laced with xenophobia, as critics deemed the Association a "secret conclave" and "lawless mob" managed by signs and passwords and led by "aliens" who have "no allegiance to the country, pay no taxes and refuse to be drafted."[27] When AMA comrades struck for higher wages in early 1863, owners attempted to replace them with non-union Belgian miners, and political officials dispatched two companies of the 37th Iowa Infantry to the scene to prevent a possible "riot."[28] Although the strike proved successful, state lawmakers soon enacted new statutes that effectively criminalized picketing by prohibiting any person from preventing another from working by "threat, intimidation, *or otherwise*." Opponents termed the new measures the LaSalle "Black Laws" because, like legal codes directed at persons of African descent, they supposedly relegated workers to second-class status, comparable to the lowest non-white wage earners.[29]

Crucially, the Association was born as the political nation was dying. In defiance of secession, AMA men tied their movement to the restoration of the country, advocating what Weaver described as "the union of states and the unity of miners." Although he vilified sectionalism as a hindrance to worker cohesion, pronouncing that "there is no East, no West, no North, no South," Weaver's miners proved mainstays of the Union Cause.[30] AMA colliers volunteered early and in disproportionately high numbers in companies such as the St. Clair County Miners and Sappers, organized in April 1861. Other Associationists backed the war effort in non-soldier capacities. Thomas Lloyd, who was too old to fight, led mining teams in Tennessee that supplied the western armies, and newspaperman John Hinchcliffe conducted pro-Union meetings. At one pro-war gathering at the Alma Mines, near O'Fallon, Hinchcliffe censured fractious anti-immigrant sentiment and called on native and foreign-born miners to defend the "people's government" against the secessionist oligarchy.[31] Combatants or not, patriotic miners harnessed nationalist symbols to foster "war spirit" while conceiving of "union"—the unity of workers and states—as a double entendre that highlighted the interdependence of political and economic democracy.[32]

Even so, the AMA began to decline in 1865 owing to anti-labor legislation

and a series of internal rifts, that resulted in the suspension of the *Weekly Miner*. The biggest single factor, however, was labor's weakened bargaining power following the war, which contributed to the failure of strikes in 1867 and 1868. The AMA nevertheless proved a critical chapter in the story of industrial unionism and class-first organizing, serving as a bridge for labor radicals into other movements.[33] Although quickly forgotten by the general public, segments of the WPUS and the American Federation of Labor would remember the Association as an important antecedent, and the Progressive Miners of America, founded in southern Illinois in 1932, celebrated the AMA as its direct ancestor.[34]

Through the AMA, John Hinchcliffe emerged as a key agitator in the miners' movement. According to one contemporary profile, he would go on to be "one of the oldest and most indefatigable advocates of labor's cause in the western United States." Born in Bradford, England, in 1822, Hinchcliffe was sent to work in a factory at the age of six before securing an apprenticeship as a tailor and becoming active in the trade union struggle. After emigrating to the United States in 1847, he married and settled in St. Clair County, was admitted to the bar in 1860, and practiced law while also working as an associate editor for the *Belleville Democrat*.[35] Described as "the attorney for the miners," Hinchcliffe founded the *Weekly Miner* in May 1863, known alternately as the *Miner and Workman's Advocate*, which was "conducted upon the broad basis of labor reform."[36] Combining trade union and anti-monopoly viewpoints and printed with the first steam-powered press in southern Illinois, the *Weekly Miner* served as the AMA's official organ. Hinchcliffe soon established himself as one of the most respected labor advocates in the nation, attending the first National Labor Congress in Baltimore in August 1866, where he represented various labor bodies from St. Louis and the "Miners' Lodge of Illinois."[37] The Englishman was elected NLU treasurer at its Chicago convention the following year, was a delegate at the 1870 Illinois Constitutional Convention, and served as a Democrat in the Illinois General Assembly, where he became instrumental in proposing the state's first mine safety laws regarding shaft ventilation.[38] Upon retirement in 1873, Hinchliffe was presented a gold watch "by the working miners of Illinois" for legislative achievements on their behalf.[39]

Hinchcliffe's activist energy pervaded the borderland. In southwestern Indiana, craftsmen formed the Evansville Workingmen's Association, which was interracial (at least in theory), as it admitted any male worker. In 1865, the Association was effectively replaced by the Evansville Workingmen's Assem-

bly, which opened a cooperative store, a mechanic's library and reading room, and a lyceum. Trade union membership grew during the decade, especially within the Iron Molders International Union. The city's union activity and the wide circulation of *Fincher's Trades Review*, the nation's most popular labor newspaper, led the Cornish-born eight-hour advocate Richard F. Trevellick to proclaim that Evansville was imbued with "the true spirit of unionism."[40] Although the city avoided the bloody confrontations that swept across the nation during the Great Upheaval in the summer of 1877, a reported two thousand workers met at the Court House on July 23 to solidarize with striking rail men. Chaired by printer James Huckeby, the workers, many of them Union veterans, proclaimed that if peaceable demands and moderate electoral reform proved ineffective, then firearms and "if necessary the torch" were the workers' only recourse against a threat equal to that of secession and an oppression greater than that endured by chattel slaves. "Most of you fought bravely during the late war between the blue and the gray," speaker Thomas D. Worrall explained, "but now you will have something to fight against far greater than that which produced the conflict."[41]

That fight played out in the streets of Belleville, where industrial unionism's imprint catalyzed a "mass meeting of the producing classes" in July 1870. Headed by local miners' and cigar makers' leadership, as well as a handful of tenant farmers, friends of labor congregated on the basis of "simple justice" for workers and their "imperiled rights." Notable attendees included Hinchcliffe, *Workingman's Advocate* editor Andrew C. Cameron, and Trevellick, who would co-found the Greenback Party four years later.[42] The day began with pomp and circumstance—a procession of workingmen, accompanied by a silver cornet band, that coursed through the major thoroughfares and public parks before terminating at City Hall Theater. It was there that Republican congressman Jehu Baker took the stage and provided an expansive yet overly linear history of workers and the class system, from slavery to serfdom to industrial labor and, finally, industrial freedom.

Judge William H. Snyder followed by asserting the rights of "those who toil for subsistence, who earn a living by the sweat of the brow—the great producing classes, who are occupied in skilled and unskilled labor." Looking to shape the meaning of the terrible bloodletting that had just been fought, Snyder argued that "the great army of workingmen" who won the late war must not now be "enslaved" by the forces of aggregated capital. The day's pinnacle, however, was Hinchcliffe's reading of a series of resolutions on behalf of the NLU. Those motions demanded the creation of a Department of Labor, changes to a

monetary system organized for the benefit of "a bondholding moneyocracy," and reforms to a tax system that "discriminated in favor of capital," including progressive taxation of bonds. They also called for opening public lands not to corporate firms but for "homesteads to actual settlers." The unionists avowed that the allotment of federal domains in the West would provide subsistence to the poor, ease competition between workers, and become a safety valve for unemployed wage earners—a way for workers, rather than owners, to exert greater control over the labor market.

The unionists' resolutions also alluded to racial hierarchies within the working class. They warned of "the importation of men" from the South, to be sure, but also from Pennsylvania and other well-trod labor routes based on mass unemployment in the mines. To most white border people, the notion of low-cost labor surely connoted Blackness, as the phrase "cheap negro labor," which dated to at least the contraband scare of 1862, was reinforced after the war by both NLU and Democratic leadership.[43] Yet Hinchcliffe's designs opposed the introduction of any "servile race" that might labor "in the interests of sordid speculators" and whose very presence served to "subordinate the labor of American workmen."[44] Although NLU members deployed the phrase "cheap labor" to refer to a variety of workers and legal conditions that they felt undercut their autonomy, including child labor, female labor, and convict labor, they perhaps cast the slur most frequently against the Chinese.[45] Whereas Democrats and Republicans alike condemned "Chinese slaves," the "Coolie slave trade," and what Horatio Seymour termed "the Chinese standard" as the newest immediate threat to white toilers, even racial progressives hoped that the presence of "cheap" Sinophonic drudgers might create a new mudsill at the bottom of the social hierarchy, thus elevating the status of freedpeople.[46] In other words, "cheapness" was an economic condition, but also frequently a raced one, and the supposed "natural" exploitability of East Asian workers led whites to describe them in relation to ostensibly "inferior" Black labor.

This failure to liberate "free labor" from its white racial signifier was central to the inability of organized workers to spearhead a sustained class movement in the postwar era. Rather than seize Reconstruction as an unprecedented opportunity, labor leaders remained largely indifferent to specific forms of oppression facing Black workers and the momentousness of the fight for democracy in the South. Despite its overall commitments to women's rights, land and monetary reform, and, above all, the eight-hour workday, the NLU's approach to the "negro question" was evasive. Unionists formed a committee

on Black labor at the 1867 convention, for instance, but consistently skirted the position and rights of Black workers. And although William H. Sylvis opposed chattel slavery and recognized the practical necessity of interracial organizing, warning fellow workmen that "the negro will take possession of the shops if we do not take possession of the negro," he accepted the fundamental supremacy of the white race and resented African American loyalty to "Black Republicanism."

Rather than speaking to issues that freedpeople prioritized—land, political liberties, and equal protection—or viewing Black laborers as a uniquely oppressed segment of the working class, Sylvis and other NLU leaders vilified the Freedmen's Bureau as "a gigantic fraud, taxing the productive white labor of the north to feed the idle negro."[47] This notion that Black workers could be used to benefit the labor movement without belonging fully to the body politic unquestionably reinforced white identity within the rank and file, especially along the sectional border. Marxist Friedrich A. Sorge later attributed the failure of the NLU, the First International, and the Workingmen's Party to have any real impact within the Black community during Reconstruction to "the prejudice of the Caucasians against the Negroes."[48]

Like the NLU, the AMA supported legal equality between the races in theory but ignored or tacitly opposed the policies required to protect that equality. Its platforms neglected freedpeoples' explicit demands of voting rights, land redistribution, and protection for their social rights, and labor representatives identified many of Reconstruction's staunchest proponents as their class enemies—those who had long "sow[ed] the seeds of prejudice against the white mechanic."[49] As Philip S. Foner contends, union officials failed to perceive that support for radicalism in the South and requisite political coalition with *some* northern capitalists "did not require labor to abandon its independent economic struggles" against Republican owners. Although Sylvis understood that emancipation had not fully freed southern Blacks, his hostility to the Radical Republican program characterized labor's ambiguity toward the formerly enslaved.[50] Even in the most organized and inclusive industries, workingmen roundly failed to comprehend the "first civil rights movement" as integral to the industrial struggle even if some unionists paired African American and labor struggles by highlighting the contradictions of Republican "freedom"—of emancipating slaves while tightening the proverbial noose on wage earners—which was ever more rooted in the dictates of the market. As one Belleville miner asked with regard to the LaSalle Black Laws, "What is this country coming to? On the one hand, they are trying to

set the black man free, and on the other these worthy gentlemen would like the Miner to sign away his freedom!"[51]

Interracialism also proved compatible with scientific racialism. Although most AMA and NLU miners eschewed the more heinous aspects of white supremacy, there was widespread belief in ethnographic laws, particularly the conviction that "the character of the negro" would ultimately "compel him to abandon the field to the white mechanic."[52] White workers regularly pointed out that in any contest between Black and white labor, the latter was certain to win out owing to both numerical advantage and intellectual superiority.[53] Many did not view legal equality as a threat because they doubted that Blacks would be able to "compete with white labor" except through race-specific legislation that would "maintain [Black people] in a false position."[54] "There is no need to import negro miners to work the St. Clair County mines," one digger explained, "because for obsequious and willing slaves, the white miners of this county can beat the negroes, and give them half the game, all the time."[55]

Assumptions about Black biological inferiority existed alongside a sense that African American rights were materializing at the expense of white workers or that political energy dedicated to the preservation of political rights in the South should be redirected northward to more urgently oppressed (and whiter) populations. Advocating mine safety reform during the state's constitutional convention in 1870, Democrat Daniel Cameron feared that Illinois had "expended all its philanthropy . . . to the black man of other states, and it has nothing left for the white man of its own."[56] A striking miner in Murphysboro, Illinois, explained that his ultimate hope was the election of officeholders who would "respect the poor white" as Radicals did freedpeople.[57]

The racial prejudices of white miners were, in this sense, not exceptional. In fact, farmer and labor organizations frequently exhibited new degrees of interracialism, and the willingness of whites to accept some level of Black admittance meant that labor was often more racially inclusive than the white population as a whole. Yet white unionists, in addition to lacking the basic resources to federate across political borders, drew on longstanding popular assumptions about the relationship between race and capitalism—between racial integration and their own exploitation. In effect, even radicalized white workers inherited a blueprint for exclusion that, despite occasional challenges to white racial unity, reinforced a culture of white preference that cast nonwhites as materially menacing. Although northern capitalists well understood the threat of interracial class struggle across sections, and of freedpeoples' calls for property redistribution spreading northward, the structural disadvantages

of northern laborers (their basic class position) combined with white racism to preclude the possibility of Black and white proletariats linking hands across the Ohio River in any systematic way.

This is not to say that the prevailing attitudes of white or Black labor in the borderland were simplistic or static. The AMA was officially "race-neutral," and NLU conventions generally welcomed Black delegates as leaders recognized the practical benefits of interracial organizing. Equipped with newfound rights to both vote and sell their labor, freedpeople represented the largest proportional bloc of American workers, and labor leaders shuddered at the prospect of that faction turning its political and economic powers against the movement. They commonly reminded members that some further degree of racial acceptance was preferable to alienating them, as white labor could not afford to array itself against both capital and Black toilers.[58] Moreover, unionists largely understood that separating workers by race benefited the ownership class. As NLU leaders avowed in 1867, "Capitalists North and South" possessed a vested interest in "foment[ing] discord between whites and blacks" as to "maintain their ascendancy and continue the reign of oppression."[59]

Trade unionists who supported legal equality sensed that the future of the labor movement depended on, according to one editor, "the cooperation and success of the colored race. . . . Their interests are our interests; our interests are theirs."[60] Regarding "white vs. colored labor," the *Workingman's Advocate* professed that "the interests of labor are identical, irrespective of nationality, sex, or creed."[61] In addition to these radical affirmations, countless Black workers, particularly in the ranks of the Colored National Labor Union, knew that their conditions were conjoined with those of white workers or, as Frederick Douglass later acknowledged, that the "slavery of wages" was "only a little less galling and crushing in its effects than chattel slavery."[62] As such, Black miners who initially entered the Midwest as strikebreakers (either knowingly or unknowingly) often became staunch union advocates.

The NLU nevertheless became smaller, whiter, and more exclusive. Sylvis died suddenly in 1869, and the following year's convention in Cincinnati exposed growing rifts between Black and white members, as white leaders refused to seat Black delegate John W. Langston, a Republican officeholder, and accused Black members of subservience to the party. They also passed an equal gender pay resolution but declined a similar resolution for Black workers. Cincinnati would be the last interracial NLU convention, and CNLU members soon determined to separate from the white labor movement because of

its propensity to "exclude from their benches and workshops worthy craftsmen and apprentices only because of their color, for no just cause."[63] It is fitting, perhaps, that the organization both demonstrated its greatest promise yet finally split along racial lines in the borderland, where white voters were fast retreating from Reconstruction. The cost of labor leadership's insistence on white partiality—the failure to uproot the racial assumptions within free white labor—was a potentially broad and self-sustaining industrial unionism.

The culmination of these various impulses—of recognizing the need for interracial cooperation in a hierarchy of labor that elevated white workers in a sectional borderland where racial aversion ran deep—was an (often begrudging) acceptance of Black political equality alongside the racialization of "competition," including stereotypes regarding subservient races of "natural" strikebreakers. Decades of racial exclusion made the use of Black strikebreakers particularly jolting to whites. Historian Herbert G. Gutman argues that the first large-scale use of Black workers to break a strike—and the subsequent specter of the Black strikebreaker—began in 1873 and 1874 in the coal fields of southeastern Ohio. However, the employment of and backlash against Black miners in southern Illinois—the mine operators' use of African Americans as what John James, secretary of the Miners' National Association, termed a "race instrument"—predated Gutman's case study.[64] As with trades women, whom male workers frequently charged with depressing the wage scale, despite a tenuous and temporary alliance between women's suffragists and the NLU, such practices reinforced stereotypes regarding Black workers as either unwitting dupes devoid of agency or parasitic aliens bent on undercutting white opportunity.[65]

In the end, the great tragedy of postwar labor federationism is that it failed to link the conditions and fates of northern workers to the battles over land, labor, and civil rights taking place across the sectional divide. Some wage-earning borderlanders backed Reconstruction out of a sense of racial justice or, more commonly and opportunistically, to keep (employed and content) former slaves consigned to the South and away from the Lower Midwest. However, white labor, on the whole, resisted large-scale federal intervention in the postwar South because they viewed it (sometimes correctly) as guided by professional-class prerogatives and because they believed Black rights threatened their wages and identities. Put another way, Reconstruction—or what Noel Ignatiev describes as the brief convergence of the interests of (at least a portion of) northern capital, which sought to break slavery and more fully integrate the South into the industrial system, and slaves, who sought their

own liberation—offended both the class and racial sensibility of white workers.[66] As Philip S. Foner relates concerning the Baltimore convention, even when advocating racial inclusion, labor congresses failed to "take any position on organizing Negro workers" and exhibited "a general lack of understanding of the general problems facing the negro people."[67] The mere willingness of some white workers to accept interracial organizing was itself remarkable, but the line between non-inclusion and de facto blackballing remained blurry.

Although that impulse to restrict was by no means unique to a particular region or social class, white workers along the border inherited—and both augmented and challenged—a prevailing exclusionist culture that limited the prospects for comprehensive unionization and worker power in favor of a "white proletarian" politics. Merged increasingly with the party's pro-industrial worker and anti-Reconstruction posture, St. Clair County, for instance, would shift toward the Democrats over the decade.[68] In addition to new European immigrants, who were embraced by party leadership, whole segments of second- and third-generation German American workers and political leaders, including Koerner, who supported the Liberal Republicans in 1872, effectively sacrificed their former racial liberalism at the altar of a new liberal nationalism predicated on sectional healing and preference for white workers.

THE END OF STATE-SPONSORED exclusion in Indiana and Illinois coincided with proletarianization and migrating freedpeople, often exacerbating ground-level anti-Black and intraclass conflict. More African American participation in the labor market seemed to symbolize the "loss of power and prestige" among white workers, and with state law out of the equation, regulating non-white "competitors" fell to local custom and collective enforcement, with each neighborhood, town, and county fending for itself to keep the dreaded "negro tide" at bay.[69] The group nature of Black restriction—promoted in various contexts by political leaders, businessmen, editors, ministers, and white workers—also generated an array of actors and a matrix of assumptions to produce a multiformed logic of aversion.

Parts of the borderland with entrenched or proportionally large Black communities experienced residential, business, and institutional segregation, rather than wholesale exclusion, attended by spasmodic racist violence. Sometimes, such exclusion was explicitly material, animated by downturns in the economy; other times, it was not tied directly to questions of work and wages. The formation of so-called sundown towns also varied from custom to

anti-Black writ to periodic racial cleansing.[70] Blacks were banned throughout Crawford County, and its principal river town of Leavenworth was so notorious that river captains allegedly disciplined Black crew by threatening to drop them ashore there.[71] Whitecappers in Washington County, also in southern Indiana, began a campaign to expel Black residents in 1864 and soon became one of the most notorious sundown counties in the Midwest.[72] In May 1865, with Indiana's exclusion law on the verge of being rescinded, residents of Warrick County attempted to pass an ordinance that would prosecute "any man who shall bring, harbor or employ any negro or mulatto."[73] When statutes failed, white citizens issued unilateral verbal or written threats. In cities, wholesale expulsion was less plausible. There exclusion occurred block-by-block, such as in December 1867, when Evansville immigrants posted signs warning free Blacks to evacuate all principally German neighborhoods by New Year's Day.[74]

In fact, the push and pull of postwar social realities were laid bare in Evansville, where workers seesawed between new forms of inclusion and anti-Black violence. "Wage slavery" and declining artisan status among coopers, furniture makers, and textile workers accompanied rapid changes in racial demography through freedpeople entering the city's labor market, mostly to work in tobacco manufacturing. And while trade unionists increasingly proposed a shorter workday rather than racial exclusion as a solution to the "influx of labor," German workers responded by intimidating Black "competitors."[75] In the summer of 1865, goaded by both the Democratic and Republican press, white Evansvillians lynched African American Joe Goins and another "negro brute" who stood accused of raping a German woman. With police standing by, a white mob stormed the jailhouse and broke down the cell door with sledgehammers. They hanged the two men from a lamp post before beating them with clubs, shooting them dead, and burning their bodies. The masses then dispersed into the streets to set fire to Black homes, threatening to "exterminate or banish all Negroes."[76]

This was not, however, a simple case of established "skilled" versus "degraded" migrant labor. Evansville stemmeries had hired newly freed field hands from Kentucky because they could be paid less, but also because their experience in tobacco processing made them more "skillful and expert." As such, the white mob carefully selected their economic targets and promised to torch two of the city's tobacco warehouses unless the owners terminated their Black workers.[77] Still, as historian Brian Butler argues, "The anxieties reflected in the lynching and riot represented more than the immediate threat

of job competition." For instance, Black agricultural workers posed no direct risk to the city's German artisans, yet many participated in the violence. Butler also acknowledges that the July 1865 riot was the result of political rhetoric fixated on slave emancipation and its supposed costs for border whites.[78] As with other postwar mobs in Cincinnati, New Albany, and southern Illinois, Evansville's rioters expressed a combination of blind rage, disconnected on the surface from matters of work and wage, and both general and specific economic resentment. Although the latter underpinned the former, there was no clear partition between "culture" and "economics." No matter its justifying language or class character, anti-Black group violence in the borderland owed to materiality *and* habit, imposed from above and honed on the ground, in which resource scarcity and racial fears were both conjoined and intensified by political borders and the labor markets they separated.

Having undergone similar wartime social transformations, white residents of nearby cities understood the racial and economic phantoms that lurked beyond familiar boundaries. The *Vincennes Sun* declared that vigilantism in Evansville was "a warning to niggers in this part of the State to keep their place and keep it well, or they will be exterminated."[79] The *New Albany Daily Ledger*, meanwhile, reported that "nothing but the complete riddance of Negroes" from the city would restore order.[80] Even those who censured the hostility viewed the Ohio River border as a site of "invasion," albeit of a different type. Evansville's civic leaders, including former mayor James G. Jones, a Republican, blamed the riot on bloodthirsty border crossers from Kentucky and "Butternuts of every class and nation," as well as German Catholic workers.[81] Though politicians largely condemned the mobs, most expressed the same sense of inevitability that would characterize white responses to later violence in Springfield and East St. Louis. Republicans cited Black "ignorance," and Democrats blamed abolitionists for supposedly emboldening African Americans. Yet both parties agreed that "outrages by negroes," the perceived violation of the color line, made white vengeance inescapable.[82]

Informed by local Black sources, one *Chicago Tribune* reporter viewed the Evansville lynching as tragically predictable in a region where keeping one's "place" involved the constant possibility of dislocation. Warrick County, to Evansville's east, had already expelled its population of freedpeople, and gangs of "secessionists and rebels" purportedly crossed the Ohio to partake in the expulsion before retreating back into Kentucky. Although these mobs represented a small percentage of the white populace, provocateurs enjoyed legal license and widespread public support. The stimuli for such bloodshed, as the

Tribune saw it, were local Democratic leaders and "the Copperhead press" that "exasperates the people against the unfortunate negro," making "pliant tools" out of white soldiers and workers by howling about taxes, debt, and wages, then blaming those woes on Black migrants.[83]

Put simply, economic transformation spurred the cultural reconfiguration of race. Through a stock character that Edward L. Ayers terms the "bad nigger" and George M. Fredrickson describes as the "Negro as beast," and in stark contrast to the "happy darky," media portrayed African Americans as diasporic parasites, economic competitors, illegal voters, and violent criminals.[84] Incarceration proved a ready-made means of racial formation and control, as uniformly white police forces and courts arrested, prosecuted, convicted, and sentenced Black people in disproportionate numbers for an array of petty crimes. In Evansville, popular depictions of public disorder, especially regarding alcohol use, shifted sharply from German and Irish immigrants toward African Americans. The all-white city recorder's court noted the "same old cases," so often involving the "drunk nigger."[85] Although Blacks made up just 6.5 percent of Evansville's population in 1870, they regularly accounted for between one-quarter and one-third of arrests for minor criminal offenses such as drunkenness, disorderly behavior, and visiting houses of prostitution. In some years, Black women made up nearly 60 percent of all prostitution arrests, a carceral rate nine times greater than their demographic representation.[86] Even the *Evansville Journal*, whose pages teemed with interest stories about "red-haired mulattos" and Black people whose "white blood preponderates" complained that the police only seemed to arrest "poor men who get drunk, prostitutes, and niggers."[87]

As law enforcement targeted African Americans across the region, state legislatures acted, too. In Ohio, Democrats pushed for a Visible Admixture Bill that would legally designate as "Black" a person who possessed any amount of "African blood."[88] And where legal and constitutional exclusion methods failed, private citizens took matters into their own hands, resulting, for example, in a spate of white-on-Black murders in 1866 and 1867 in southern Illinois and Indiana. When a second such crime in Warrick County went unprosecuted in the fall of 1869, the *Indianapolis Daily Journal* bemoaned the reason: "The victim was a 'nigger' and this is a 'white man's government.'"[89]

Faith in their racial supremacy provided comfort to some white workers. With Radical Reconstruction in full swing, the *Workingman's Advocate* noted in the spring of 1868 that while slavery was abolished and free labor vindicated, "the ghastly shadow of negro labor is looming in the distance."

Many trade unionists who argued that "negro competition" was a false flag did so because they believed Black labor inferior to white. For example, NLU editorials reasoned that white workers should fear neither African American political rights nor labor rivalry because freedom and enfranchisement had not altered the basic fact of Black subordination. "By emancipation the *relation* only of the slave to the master has changed," one unionist asserted, "and not the nature of the negro; the nature of the negro remains the same whether in the condition of freedom or slavery." He reminded readers that because "the Caucasian, mentally considered, is the superior race," the white mechanic had "nothing to fear from negro labor," as the "natural" deficiencies of Black people would eventually lead to their extinction. "The ghost of negro competition," he concluded, "no longer need haunt the mind of the white workingmen."[90]

The minds of most white workingmen, however, remained objects of prey. Conservatives framed the protection of white employment as a paramount issue in the fall of 1865. Published throughout Ohio, the song "Hurrah for General Morgan" tied the interests of labor and Union veteranhood to white supremacy, painting its gubernatorial candidate Democrat George Washington Morgan as an ally of white workers and "boys in blue."[91] Although defeated by fellow veteran Jacob Dolson Cox that November, Morgan was elected to Congress in 1866 on an anti-Reconstruction platform. Democrats activated the "ghost" of racial replacement again during the presidential election of 1868 as part of the most nakedly white supremacist campaign in U.S. history. Across the borderland, ex-soldiers calling themselves "White Boys in Blue" formed as a masculinized, quasi-military arm of the Democratic Party, supporting the Constitution "as it was" and marching against the so-called "revolutionary acts of Congress."[92]

The organization opposed any tinge of racial integration or equality, and leaders urged white men to "band together to prevent the aggressions and innovations of the colored race."[93] White Boys brandished wartime battle flags, escorted Democratic candidates during campaign stops, and clashed with African Americans and Republicans in street confrontations, even instigating riots and the destruction of Black homes and businesses.[94] Declaring, "We fought for the Union—not for the Negro" and insistent that the restored government remained a "white man's nation," the White Boys barred Blacks and "negro worshippers." Members also melded fears of "amalgamation" and red republicanism through early examples of "race mixing is communism."[95] White Boys likewise painted their cause as that of white workingmen and soft

money, espousing greenbacks instead of gold.[96] Opponents disagreed, alleging that the league was distinguished not by its working-class character but by political disloyalty and violent white supremacy. Branded by Republicans as a secret and un-democratic order, the only true qualification for entry into the White Boys, one editor maintained, was that its members had to formally "prove that they were *white* men."[97]

"Proof" required mobilization, driven by panic. Congressman Samuel S. Cox implored all Ohioans with "blue eyes, light hair, white faces, and intelligent brains" to save their "white brothers" from an impending racial apocalypse.[98] In the wake of defeat, Indiana Democrats authored an Address to the People of Indiana. The preamble read: "We believe the government was formed for white men, in the interest of white men, as well as we know it was created by white men, by whom the colored people were looked upon as an inferior and subordinate race."[99] On the defensive against Radicals in Congress and Republican majorities in their own states, border Democrats organized scores of anti-Black suffrage meetings in Cincinnati, New Albany, and throughout southern Illinois. In Evansville, editors avowed to "*colonize the negro* and retain political power solely in the hands of the white race," as "the introduction of the negro element" was a source of "discord, anarchy, and a war of races."[100] As the city's ghettoized Black population increased from under 100 in 1860 to nearly 1,500 by 1870 (and would double each of the next two decades), the Democratic press regularly melded Black and red scare by warning of "Africanized" disorder from below—racial as well as economic leveling—and an emergent "black commune."[101]

Democrats maintained that African American suffrage was an affront to the "natural" racial order and a particular threat to poor whites. The *Cincinnati Enquirer* warned that the "political" question of suffrage was actually a "social" question, as Black voting would prove a "stepping stone" toward "amalgamation and miscegenation."[102] An illustration in the *Spirit of Democracy*, the Democratic weekly in Woodsfield, Ohio, elucidated this point. Titled "The Result of Negro Suffrage," the image depicted a freedman, his free papers and a flask of whiskey in tow, standing atop a manacled white laborer with a rifle butt pressed hard against the white man's face. Proclaiming, "Dis is de way we'll rule de White Trash when we gets de ballot," the former slave strikes a conquering pose of "negro rule" triumphant. The illustration's subtitle, "Will White Men Vote to be Ruled by Negroes and Bayonets?," was meant to repudiate the Fifteenth Amendment while supporting George H. Pendleton, the "white man's candidate," in the gubernatorial election of 1869 against

Figure 3. "The Result of Negro Suffrage," *Spirit of Democracy*, October 12, 1869.

Rutherford B. Hayes and his "Radical Negro Party." Bearing the slogan "White Supremacy is the word!" the image's overarching message of racial hierarchy was lost on no one. Nor was its class-oriented subtext. The cartoon implied that newly emancipated Blacks mocked and resented their poor white neighbors, and political empowerment for freedpeople would come at the expense of the already downtrodden.[103] (See Figure 3.)

Meanwhile, Republicans exploited "negro invasion" to advance the Fifteenth Amendment and responded to Democratic racism with attacks on poor whites. For reasons both pragmatic and personal, party leaders held that national civil rights legislation, and voting rights in particular, would prove a means of confining Black people to the South. Robert G. Ingersoll, the freethinking orator, explained that anything short of universal manhood suffrage—in effect, allowing Black voting in the North and not the South—would "make Illinois a negro Mecca." "Allow them to vote everywhere and then they will remain where they are and where the climate suits them," he explained.[104] And as Democrats capitalized on anti-poor tropes, Republicans reinforced them. An Associated Press story from 1871, widely circulated in Republican papers, inverted popular ideas about class, race, and migration patterns.

Responding to the notion that southern Blacks were unwelcome in the Midwest, the account, which held that Nashville's African American community was dismayed when a local Black man married an impoverished white woman from Ohio, supposed that poor Midwestern whites were likewise not wanted in the South. "The negroes of Nashville are greatly disgusted," the reporter explained, "and are said to be violently opposed to this importation of Ohio 'poor white trash.'" Manufacturing classist devices to combat racial prejudice, the story served to remind white readers that, like their social "betters" in the North, Black southerners also resented poor, propertyless "trash."[105]

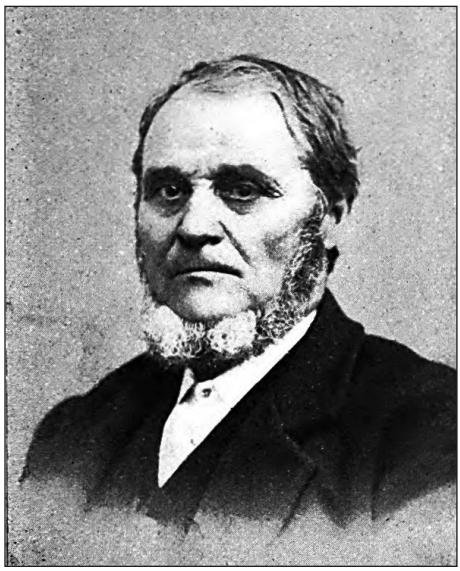
Yet the postwar was not a simple story of worker segmentation and anti-Black ideology imposed from above. Proletarianization fostered new worker self-activity, which opened possibilities for interracial cooperation, even within "Butternut" districts. Industrial transformation, including building feeder lines along the Illinois Central and opening up Williamson and surrounding counties to commercial coal mining, bred class conflict that assumed agrarian and industrial forms. Tillers and shop workers in Lawrenceburg, Indiana, formed the Farmers' and Workingmen's Association of Southern Indiana, which called on lawmakers to regulate unbridled "capital consolidation" and prohibit public land grants to corporations.[106] Diggers in Belleville struck in protest of wage reductions in the spring of 1871.[107] In Du Quoin, miners employed by the Illinois Central Iron and Coal Mining Company walked off the job that summer to protest the yellow dog contracts, which they deemed a violation of manhood and free labor principles.[108] In the fall of 1874, Belleville men walked out again, this time demanding an eight-hour workday and the unionization of all "black-leg" (non-union) workers. To thwart potential "disorder" (now synonymous with the interruption of production), local officials formed a militia company, and the state supplied its members with rifles.[109] Indeed, worker drives for collective control squared off against what David Montgomery describes as "the increasingly awesome ability of the firms' owners to impose their will." As Montgomery notes, "The process of accumulation involved social conflict not only because workers and owners disputed over the division of the product between wages and profits but also because the social character of production clashed with the private nature of ownership."[110]

WIDENING CLASS DIVISION HAD A curious impact on the color line, which came together and broke apart in unpredictable ways. In fact, the road

to the most striking interracial political insurgency of the early Gilded Age coursed through a region infamous for its racial exclusion. Nestled between two slave states in deep southern Illinois, Little Egypt saw agrarian discontent combined with early industrial worker organization to forge new strains of economic populism, anti-monopolism, and attempts at farmer-labor coalition near the war's end. Kickstarted by the nation's first coal miners' union, the following years saw labor advocacy spread within southern Illinois mining communities as St. Johns and other towns filled public offices with "workingmen's" ticket nominees, some of which championed financial reform.[111] This populist alliance between aggrieved farmers and coal diggers in places like Du Quoin constituted perhaps the earliest coordination between unionized miners and agrarian anti-monopolists, paving the way for Greenback-Laborism and future farmers' and industrial workers' cooperation.[112] It was also part and parcel of the politics of the region's one-term Republican U.S. congressman, Andrew Jackson "Jack" Kuykendall. His moment in the national political spotlight speaks to the intricacies of labor, race, and region during the Reconstruction era, and the complex promises of and barriers to class solidarity.

Historians have located the roots of Greenbackism in Illinois and cited Kuykendall as one of its first advocates to grace the national stage. Yet they have not explored the movement's early and surprising origins in the deep southern part of a state that elected high-profile Greenbackers Alexander Campbell, Adlai Stevenson, and Albert P. Forsythe, and where Greenback-Democrat fusion candidate and NLU-endorsed Lewis Steward came less than seven thousand votes away from winning the governorship in 1876.[113] The standard account of Illinois Greenbackism, if there is such a thing, is that it developed in response to economic downturn and Reconstruction fatigue and proved most popular in central and western Illinois, with anti-monopoly politics centered on the agricultural corridor west and south of Chicago. The argument goes that despite the Greenback Party's ephemeral existence, its message of corporate and financial regulation "remained part of Illinois political culture" as former Greenbackers joined other reform movements or reentered the Democratic ranks.[114]

Although true, this telling is incomplete. The party emerged out of the independent tickets during the depression, but nascent greenbackism (not yet Greenbackism) in Little Egypt materialized in the mid-1860s, and the party came to hold mass appeal in southern Illinois. Kuykendall's first "greenback campaign" of 1864–1867—which centered on monetary doctrine and grew



FROM *HISTORY 31ST REGIMENT ILLINOIS VOLUMTEERS* (1902)

Figure 4. Andrew J. Kuykendall. Date unknown. A Union veteran, Kuykendall's blend of labor populism and racial restriction spoke to a specific type of border politics.

to attack class inequality, as well as wage and workday injustice—stemmed from a constellation of popular attitudes that bridged Jacksonian democracy and early Republican producerism in the face of rapid industrial change. For Kuykendall, the demand for federal "greenbacks," issued during the war, articulated labor republicanism through a framework of Union veteran identity while also repudiating the Republicans' growing industrial-financial orientation. Although often characterized as a "conservative Republican," Kuykendall was atypical in which elements of the activist state he promoted and rejected. In a party whose basis of power was shifting toward industrial-corporate interests, Kuykendall—an agrarian reformer—proved an outlier.

This populist-business fracture was not, however, the only point of intra-party division, as the specific regional and racial context that gave rise to Greenbackism attests. Wedged between the sectional borders of Kentucky and Missouri, Kuykendall's district possessed a longstanding, bipartisan commitment to Black exclusion. The war had led to a profound electoral shift in the formerly Democratic-dominated southern Illinois as, for countless veterans, the Republican Party became tantamount to national loyalty and the Union Cause. It also had some impact on white racial attitudes, and 1865 brought the end of state-sponsored Black restriction. Yet Kuykendall's economic leveling, combined with deep hostility toward racial integration, Black civil rights, and the racially liberalizing elements of Reconstruction, largely reflected his constituency. In other words, the Kuykendall insurgency, with its monetary

reform tied to trade unionism, surely helped lay a cornerstone for future farmer-labor coordination, connecting loosely affiliated populist currents to the NLU, then later to the GLP, the Knights of Labor, and the Populists. It was not a foregone conclusion, however, that the finished structure would span racial lines. Only through dissemination, debate, and changing realizations of self-interest—particularly the unifying potential of a class-first approach to organizing—did early greenbackism marginalize Kuykendall's white nationalism and Black exclusion in favor of some degree of interracialism.

A native of Johnson County, Kuykendall had been a farmer and merchant before the war. As a state senator, he introduced a bill to strengthen the Fugitive Slave Law and quickly gained a reputation for his "devotion to the peculiar institution" as to safeguard racial separation in his home district.[115] When war erupted, Kuykendall enlisted as a major in John A. Logan's 31st Illinois Infantry, only to resign in the spring of 1862 to focus on Illinois politics.[116] Like Logan, Kuykendall entered the Union Army as an unflinching Douglas Democrat before converting to Republicanism mid-war. His transformation was a deliberate one, propelled by two years of bipartisan Union rallies and pro-war stump speeches that drew the intensifying ire of Peace Democrats and left him "bitterly hated by traitors and copperheads."[117]

Although Kuykendall lacked Logan's animated style, Midwestern Republicans celebrated the War Democrat for selling Lincoln's policies in Williamson and Union counties, the supposed den of antiwar activity.[118] In the spring of 1864, he rewarded their good faith by coming out as a Republican and appearing as a delegate at the state party convention.[119] Between the metamorphoses of Logan and Kuykendall, the *Chicago Tribune*, which had once condemned Little Egypt for its "rabid proslavery doctrines" and questioned the loyalty of its citizens to the government, now praised southern Illinoisans and proclaimed that its people would uphold the most radical measures to put down the rebellion.[120] Like most Egyptians, Kuykendall adopted what he saw as a commonsense approach to liberal war aims. According to reports, he became convinced of the need to make war on the South's economic and social system after being forced to storm fortifications that were built by slave labor at the battle of Fort Donelson.[121] Kuykendall was, in other words, a practical emancipator.

The 1864 congressional campaign upended one-party control in Illinois's Thirteenth District, long known as "the old Democratic Gibraltar."[122] Harnessing his new party's identification with Unionism and relishing the role of Lincoln's unlikely ally in the land of Douglas, Kuykendall narrowly defeated the

notorious Peace Democrat William J. Allen by gaining nearly ten thousand votes over the 1860 Republican total, in which Logan had rebuffed Republican David T. Linegar (Douglas had vanquished Lincoln in the district by a similar margin of close to sixteen thousand votes).[123] Pope, Perry, and Massac counties pivoted from firmly Democratic in 1860 to majorities for Kuykendall. The turnaround was most striking in Kuykendall's home county of Johnson, which swelled from only forty Republican votes in 1860 to more than 1,200 four years later. Although Allen men proclaimed that thousands of Union soldiers stationed in the river counties had tipped the election by voting illegally, in reality, Kuykendall's ascendency represented a shotgun marriage between the Lincoln administration and conservative Lower Midwesterners who were eager to demonstrate their loyal bona fides.[124] The victory was, according to one observer, "a great political revolution in Lower Egypt," encapsulating the region's supposed turn toward a "Union-Republican war spirit."[125]

In some ways, Kuykendall proved a standard moderate Republican. During his brief time in Congress, he always backed the party slate of candidates, pairing the Union Cause with the party of Logan and Lincoln. Kuykendall "gave earnest support to all necessary war measures," according to one party colleague, and avidly endorsed internal improvements. The fledgling congressman even underwrote several infrastructure projects, including a federal post office in Cairo and a naval station in Mound City.[126] He was typical in his partisan patriotism, too. Although Kuykendall championed a mild Reconstruction and opposed Radicals who would reduce seceded states to territorial status and implement African American suffrage, he proved a relentless waver of the bloody shirt. He excoriated congressional colleagues of the "copperhead persuasion" who were willing to admit former Confederates.[127]

However, Kuykendall's views on the relationship between capital and labor deviated from the party mainstream. While many Republican leaders gradually aligned with big business, Kuykendall—who believed the war had been won by agrarians, artisans, and wage earners—propagated a type of "forgotten man" populism embodied by white western veterans. He soon made his biggest impact as a monetary reformer, promoting cooperation between "producers" in the face of industrial consolidation. As Kuykendall saw it, the recent bloodletting had preserved the nation and ended the blight of African slavery. But rather than achieve a wider "emancipation of labor," it accelerated corporate capitalism and undermined the democratic principles for which he and other fighting men had stayed the course. Near the end of his congressional tenure, he introduced a monetary reform bill in Congress, known widely

as the "Kuykendall bill," which quickly gained favor among small farmers and organized labor in southern Illinois. Officially, the act sought to reorganize the U.S. Treasury Department by creating a "Board of Management of the Currency and Revenue" that would include no bank officers or stockholders. A broader distribution of authority might "provide a true national currency and to provide for the collection and disbursement of the revenue." Unofficially, it was designed to curb the power of big banks and democratize the money system to adjust a deeply imbalanced order that favored what Kuykendall termed "non-producing capital" over "producing labor."

Kuykendall outlined his proposed legislation in a speech titled "Labor and Capital," which he delivered before the House in January 1867. Speaking for miners, farmers, mechanics, and small merchants and manufacturers, he argued that the nation's fundamental problem was a basic contradiction predicated on the labor theory of value. Labor was "the only true source of national wealth," Kuykendall contended, yet "laborers, as a whole, are poor." Having fought and bled to save the republic, he shuddered at the economic circumstances the war had produced: "those who build palatial residences, living in hovels; those who manufacture the finest apparel, clothed in the coarsest fabrics; and those who produce in abundance the most wholesome and delicate food, subsisting upon the poorest diet."

At the same time, "another class, few in number, not physically, intellectually, or morally better . . . acquire the larger portion of the products of labor, live in comparative idleness, surrounded with all the comforts, conveniences, and luxuries of life." Moreover, neither the heightened productivity of workers nor the introduction of unprecedented labor-saving devices had alleviated deprivation; in fact, the material gap seemed to be widening. "The wealth continues to centralize in fewer hands," Kuykendall lamented, "the number of industrious poor who own no real and little personal property, continues to increase."

What Kuykendall viewed as the social predicament was not simply poverty amid plenty, masses of working poor in a wealthy and industrializing nation; it was also a republican crisis. Those whom he labeled "the soulless usurers, the corporations and monopolies which have been fostered into gigantic proportions" were, like the Slave Power before them, exercising undue influence over the political system, rendering voting democracy less and less responsive. Although he identified "non-producing classes," rather than capitalism itself, as the fundamental problem, Kuykendall proved relentless in his condemnation of America's swelling "class of financiers," whose wealth and authority were no less arbitrary than the divine right of kings. The clout of the wealthy,

he chafed, "has a death grip upon the nation, which, like the institution of slavery, it will not yield until utterly destroyed."

In fact, Kuykendall estimated that this anti-democratic cabal now controlled roughly 60 percent of the country's wealth and that the late war had accelerated the pace of capital aggregation, thus imposing a "practical slavery" on northern laborers. Chattel slavery may have been abrogated, but the nation still contained a "cotton aristocracy" in the plantation South as well as a fast-growing "iron aristocracy" in the industrial centers of the Northeast and Upper Midwest whose lust for profit equaled that of the slaveholding "oligarchs." Rather than simply liberate and "materially better the condition of the poor African," the effect of the war had been to "nationalize" slavery.

The root problem, as Kuykendall saw it, was what Gilded Age reformers would later term "class legislation" in the form of monetary policy. As a not-fully-repentant Jacksonian, Kuykendall believed this "evil of concentrated wealth" was grounded in a financial system that perpetuated "the accumulative power of capital." Because money was the medium of distribution between capital and labor—the single most regulatable link binding workers to owners—the easiest way to offset soaring inequality was to reform the monetary system through lower interest rates and (in effect) currency inflation and a more progressive tax system. That standardization, made permanent not by a secretary operating hand-in-glove with capital but by a board working in the interests of producers, would ease pressure on renters, small-scale debtors, and wage earners. Kuykendall maintained that his legislation would create a fairer balance between the nation's regions, which stood highly unequal due to "varieties of climate and productions," benefiting farmers and mechanics in relative decline economies like southern Illinois. Money, he avowed, should be the servant of labor, not its master.[128]

Kuykendall's linking of farmer and miner plights in Little Egypt to national banks and currency contraction was not without precedent. John Hinchliffe had also attributed coal miner grievances to a "bond-holding aristocracy."[129] This mode of populism borrowed heavily from the monetary theories of Edward Kellogg, whose *Labor and Other Capital* (1849) advocated uplifting American workers by transforming the money system.[130] Kellogg promoted greenbackism and maintained that interest rates should be fixed by elected officials, who were democratically responsive, rather than banks. Lower rates and additional paper money would make it easier for cooperatives, small businesses, and individual artisans to obtain capital and provide dignified employment, or so the theory went. In the hands of the National Labor

Union, Kellogg's work became "the bible of the labor reformers," popularized in worker conventions by Alexander Campbell and Andrew Cameron in the pages of the *Workingman's Advocate*. Many NLU leaders, including William Sylvis and Richard Trevellick, came to adopt currency reform through party politics as a centerpiece of organizational energy—a cure-all that, for some, superseded even struggles over wages and workplaces. By 1868, nearly two-thirds of the NLU platform was dedicated to currency reform.[131]

Of course, many unionists understood that greenbackism was no magic bullet. While proponents argued that inflationary money and fixed interest rates would secure capital for the masses, facilitate worker cooperatives, and perhaps eventually preclude the need for trade unions altogether, skeptics feared the labor movement would "lose itself in the wilderness of monetary reform." Viewing the "currency panacea" as a distraction from the more fundamental issues of questions of wages, hours, and conditions, Ira Steward explained that any greenbackism that did not foreground unionism "leaves the laborer a laborer, the capitalist the capitalist, between whom there is an irrepressible conflict."[132] Marxists were even more pointed in their attacks. As socialist Friedrich A. Sorge wrote to Karl Marx in 1870, the last year that African Americans attended the NLU convention, an organization formerly of "brilliant prospects" had been "poisoned by greenbackism."[133]

Even so, Sylvis and the NLU heartily endorsed the Kuykendall bill, labeling it "a measure around which all the industrial classes could unite." Insisting that "workingmen must legislate for workingmen," the NLU even used the proposed legislation to call for the electoral alliance of miners, farmers, and mechanics by forming a "National Co-Operative Party." The third party never materialized, and the movement toward political action in the name of currency modification would contribute to the NLU's rapid demise, as would Sylvis's sudden death in 1869. Yet Kuykendall stayed the course, serving as a representative of the Anti-Monopoly Association of Vienna at the second National Labor Congress in Chicago in August 1867, where members avowed that "all laborers should demand to the fair distribution of present products between non-producing capital and labor." For the loose assortment of workingmen, anti-monopoly, and greenback delegates, the late war had exposed a critical chink in the capitalist system. "The present accumulative power of money greatly exceeds the increase in wealth by natural production," they maintained, "and tends to enrich the few capitalists, and to impoverish the wealth producing classes."[134]

Meanwhile, southern Illinois's other congressman, Jehu Baker of Bel-

leville, also exuberantly carried the labor reform and anti-monopoly standard. He maintained that the War of the Rebellion had been a species of class war, with an army of democratic producers vanquishing a self-perpetuating slaver elite.[135] A Republican for most of his career, Baker served four terms in Congress, three of them non-consecutive, and the final one as a Democrat. He supported federal Reconstruction and the protection of "Union power" in the former Confederacy, the alternative to which was the restoration of a "*secession rebel class*." He likewise embraced the constitutional enshrinement of equal protection through the Fourteenth Amendment, as well as Black enfranchisement in the South as a matter of "justice" and to "neutralize the ballots of white secessionists with the ballots of colored Unionists."[136]

Although Baker held sincere reservations about federal overreach and what he deemed democratic excess, including felon voting, he nevertheless gained a reputation as one of labor's allies in the courts upon leaving Congress and returning to the practice of law.[137] On multiple occasions, he shared the stage with Trevellick and Cameron, and unionists recommended him as a delegate to the 1872 NLU convention.[138] Unlike Kuykendall, Baker was neither an economic radical nor a racial reactionary. Yet his soft economic populism and eventual turn toward the Democratic Party exposed the slow unraveling of the Republican wartime coalition and a widening intraparty division over the meaning of "free labor."

Kuykendall, in particular, embodied the movement among some Republicans to expand the free labor concept against capital and toward worker cooperation. In time, his inroads with the NLU on the money question led him toward the Eight-Hour Work Day crusade. A central demand of Illinois workers since 1864, the state legislature passed an eight-hour law in 1867. However, the measure contained no enforcement mechanism and only applied to non-farmworkers paid by the day. This loophole permitted employers to get around the law by contracting with workers by the week, month, or year or paying them "by the piece" and according to task.[139] Although David Montgomery argues that the demand for "just laws" without any consideration that new public bureaucracies would be required to enforce such statutes was consistent with popular ideas regarding the role of the central state, and fellow historians John B. Jentz and Richard Schneirov contend that achieving mass legitimacy through passage was an end in itself, Illinois wage earners understood that the new law constituted paper justice—a distinction without a difference.[140] Regardless, owners responded hostilely. Many refused to recognize the law or determined to make up lost profits by reducing hourly wages.

Others threatened a "capital strike" and to move production to another state.

Labor leaders countered by hosting a massive demonstration in Chicago on May 1, the day the law was set to go into effect. In his speech following the mile-long parade, Trevellick celebrated the variety of ethnic identities and argued that workingmen should control their hours, and because they, not the capitalists, had fought, bled, and died in the late war.[141] Kuykendall also linked the workers' campaign to the Union Cause and agreed that "eight hours for labor, eight hours for rest, and eight hours for the improvement of the mind" was the only "enlightened" course. Despite his position as an elected official, Kuykendall acknowledged that an electoral approach to the class struggle was insufficient, as even politicians elected by workingmen could be "bought by capital." Owners would only concede to a true eight-hour law through collective demand. "Capital and labor never have or can unite," Kuykendall declared, as there now existed in all modern societies a perpetual conflict between "the wealth-producing class and the wealth-owning class," with the latter ever seeking to preserve the former as submissive bondsmen. "If all the wealth is produced by labor it ought to be owned by labor," he explained. "Otherwise labor is as completely the slave as the African ever was." It was, therefore, imperative that the war's liberationist aims "not stop with freeing the African" but also advance a wider emancipation of labor.[142] For many Republicans, Kuykendall's economic radicalism had gone too far. Five days later, the Republican *Chicago Tribune* pronounced him fully ostracized, neither belonging to nor wanted by either party.[143]

Increasingly a pariah, Kuykendall was back in Chicago three months later at the National Labor Union's Second Annual Congress. While the Republican press lampooned delegates Trevellick, Cameron, and Hinchcliffe for not, in fact, belonging to the working class and rebuked Kuykendall specifically for his incomprehensible "pet financial schemes," conventioneers continued to lobby for a comprehensive eight-hour law.[144] Hoping to subsume gender, racial, and sectional differences under the workers' banner, they passed a resolution petitioning Congress for legislation "for the general benefit of laborers without distinction of sex, color, or locality." Asking, "Shall we make [Black workers] our friends, or shall capital be allowed to turn them against us?" white leaders sold interracialism as a matter of self-interest and preservation.[145]

Yet that view was far from unanimous, as white workers continued to hold a range of perspectives concerning the "negro question." The final report of the NLU's Committee on Colored Labor, which recommended postponing any resolution on the status of Black workers as either comrades or compet-

itors, spoke to this divergence. It read: "While we feel the importance of the subject, and realize the danger in the future of competition in mechanical negro labor, we find the subject involved in so much mystery, and upon it so wide diversity of opinion among our members, we believe that it is inexpedient to take action on the subject." Although some delegates spoke out against the failure of white unions to admit "respectable colored mechanics," and Sylvis warned that racial "antagonism" would "kill off the trades union" if the two races were not industrially "consolidated," Kuykendall proposed striking any discussion of race from the convention.[146]

Indeed, Kuykendall's universalist language did not equate to emancipation for all. The NLU backed interracial collaboration, and its platform endorsed "the co-operation of the whole people, white and black, male and female," but reform only made sense to Kuykendall in exclusionist terms, as benefits for whites depended on the marginalization of non-whites.[147] As a true blue Unionist, Kuykendall supported loyalty oaths for former rebels, backed the Civil Rights Act of 1866, and championed a federal military presence in the South to protect the constitutional rights of freedpeople.[148] For all that, he vehemently opposed Black voting and officeholding, and opposed both a bill granting Black suffrage in the District of Columbia and the Reconstruction Act of 1867.[149]

Democrats praised Kuykendall while Republicans slandered him as a "half way Johnson man," increasingly out of step with a party galvanized around civil rights.[150] The *Chicago Tribune* went so far as to charge him with apostasy, avowing that his alleged Copperhead sympathies made him one of the only House members "whose Republicanism is not above suspicion."[151] Yet, despite a political trajectory that saw him change positions on everything from war measures to party affiliation, Kuykendall had always been a committed proponent of racial *in*equality. "No legislation," he made clear at the outset of his legislative career, "could ever make the negro equal to the white man."[152] As evidence of his unwavering commitment to those principles, he concluded "Capital and Labor" with a simple plea: "Pass the bill, adopt this system, separate the races, colonize the African."[153]

To be sure, the economic progressivism of farmers and workingmen in Little Egypt, which grew after the war in proportion to the reach and inequities of industrial capitalism, stood alongside the restriction of whole sections of working people. This exclusionism was by no means unique to organized labor, which was often more racially integrated than other predominantly white institutions. White workers across the borderland nevertheless inher-

ited a cultural framework—expectations that connected racial homogeneity to material security while tying scarcity to the capacity of non-white "competitors" to traverse nearby and fluctuant political borders—which they employed and refit to meet a host of changing threats, real and perceived. Despite his Republican affiliation, support for (mild) Reconstruction, and keen sensitivity to the dangers that industrial capitalism posed to democracy, Kuykendall's hope for a greater degree of worker justice was profoundly limited—rendered impossible even—by his refusal to view Black people as fully within the American body politic.

Like most white "producers" he spoke for, Kuykendall neither interpreted Reconstruction as a basic expression of democratic reform that would benefit all laborers nor did he understand freedpeople as a uniquely exploited class that might make common cause with white toilers. Rather, Kuykendall believed that the formal separation between Black and white, through either de facto exclusion or the federal colonization of freedpeople, would benefit both. This position contained rationales both social and economic. In particular, he saw African American restriction—the confinement or removal of non-white "competitors"—as a boon to white laborers and farmers, a position that surely reflected the majority will of his electorate. On "the question of the African race," Kuykendall professed that southern Illinoisans were "a producing people . . . more interested in the price of beef, pork, corn, wheat, and oats than they are the negroes being made their equals at the ballot box." Instead of political rights and social integration, Kuykendall proposed a federal treaty with Mexico that would "colonize the American citizens of African descent in the warm climate and rich valleys" of Latin America.[154]

These allusions to race science, racial homogeneity, colonization, and free white labor, though consistent with the conservative Republicanism along the border, revealed both the limits of his political transformation and the prejudice long directed at his home region. The press had always depicted Kuykendall as a downstate oddity, but state party leaders now openly mocked him in exoticist and classist terms for his unfashionable dress and crude speech patterns, comparing his backwoods traits to those of the vilified Andrew Johnson.[155] Alas, Kuykendall's lack of enthusiasm for congressional Reconstruction and his predilection for economic radicalism led state Republicans to replace him on the 1866 ticket with party stalwart Green Berry Raum.[156] Historian Gretchen Ritter addresses concerted Republican efforts during the mid-1870s to divide financial reform and trade unionism as part of the "resurgence of Republican hegemony" (the party elected nine consecutive

governors between 1856 and 1888).[157] However, the coup that ousted Kuykendall suggests that some Republicans attempted to isolate these movements a decade earlier.

Though abandoned by party leaders, including Logan, Kuykendall presumably remained a Republican for the remainder of his life, serving as a county judge, convention delegate, and state senator during the 1870s and eventually as vice president of the Illinois State Bar Association.[158] Meanwhile, Kuykendall never vacated his dream of seeing the party house a coalition of labor and agrarian reformers. He devoted much political energy to courting disaffected Independent Reformers, whose short-lived anti-monopoly party emerged in Illinois in 1874 in response to the Radical-Liberal split within the Republican camp, prefiguring the Greenback Party.[159] Despite his retreat from the national spotlight, Kuykendall's veneration for the Union Cause alongside a blend of economic populism and Black exclusion—of nationalism, both political and racial—embodied a new, modern phase concerning "the ghost of negro competition," with white fears of emancipation and attitudes toward Reconstruction priming postwar expectations toward Black strikebreakers. It was also part of a watershed between the antebellum market and postwar industrial understandings of free labor.

Rather than social relations centered on conflict between owners and workers, Kuykendall's understanding of "class" was rooted in Jacksonian notions of "production." Greenbackism partly rested on the theory that fixed interest rates would enable small businesses to secure capital, stay afloat, and provide employment. It was, in this sense, antithetical to Marxist conceptions of productive relations, the effect of which narrowed the horizons of any working-class "emancipation." The fact that Kuykendall's workerist identities did not correspond to ownership allowed them to become as much racial as vocational and for "white" to prove as salient as "labor." While almost anyone could profess to be a "producer," fewer could lay legal claim to whiteness.

Kuykendall's understanding of "labor," therefore, proved a mishmash of racial qualifications and property exceptions, leading him not only to demonize segments of (non-white) workers but also champion certain types of owners. Accordingly, "free white labor" appealed not only to artisans, industrial wage earners, and small agrarians but also to "productive" capitalists and petty-bourgeois professionals. This murky delineation of class engendered two important features common among postwar reformers. First, for Kuykendall and countless others, class politics were "more than a labor issue"; they were tied inextricably to the Union memory and the experience of civil

war.[160] These so-called workingmen viewed producerism as an extension of veteran identity and deemed reform a continuation of the preservation of democratic government and the destruction of slavery. The late war had been a contest won by free laborers, and the victors now sought to make good on their understandings of what, precisely, it meant to be free.

So, what does Kuykendall's rise and fall in national politics tell us about the dynamics of class, race, and region during early Reconstruction? Kuykendall's flip from War Democrat to Republican alienated him from his former party and especially the Peace Democrat or "Copperhead" faction in his home region. Just the same, his limited view of Reconstruction, coolness toward the protection of freedpeople, and economic progressivism (albeit racially qualified) drew the ire of Republican elites, particularly the *Chicago Tribune*, leading eventually to his ousting. Kuykendall's economic policies and support for trade unions won him the backing of the NLU, and his views on Black rights in the South indicated the larger failure of white labor to comprehend Reconstruction as a workers' movement. But his continued support for Black exclusion and colonization, well after the repeal of state exclusion laws, ensured him no more than a marginal role within any interracial party or organization.

In this sense, Kuykendall prefigured and diverged from future patterns within the farmer-labor movement, and his hostility toward Radical Reconstruction proved a feature of anti-monopolism and white labor reform into the twentieth century. It accentuated, moreover, the basic contradiction of simultaneously purporting to speak for "producers" while excising entire blocs of propertyless wage earners. By affirming the preeminence of the "white" workers, Kuykendall denied the reality—long borne out by labor abolitionists including Wendell Phillips and Frederick Douglass—that compromised social rights for some workers had profound implications for the whole working class.

Kuykendall's exclusionary-colonizationist approach toward the "negro question" was completely out of step with the dominant position of the National Labor Union, the Eight-Hour campaign, and the Greenback-Labor Party. NLU editors, making a critical yet flawed distinction between "immigration" (which they encouraged) and "importation" (which they opposed), occasionally viewed colonization as a possible solution to the "Chinese question."[161] Yet leadership denounced Black restriction and removal as impractical, costly, and counterproductive. Although NLU leaders debated scientific racialism and many accepted the superiority of the so-called white race, they

largely recognized, from the outset, the practical need to win African American workers to labor's cause. Whereas even NLU conservatives believed that Black workers could be used to benefit the (white) labor movement without belonging fully to the body politic, Kuykendall sought to bar them altogether. This suggests that the possibility of an interracial farmer-labor movement in deep southern Illinois was stifled not only by the success of Democrats in channeling farmer-labor radicalism back into their party but also by an ongoing popular commitment to exclusion, as Kuykendall and others chose racial homogeneity over any attempt to coalesce with freedpeople in a labor program.

Ultimately, Kuykendall did not possess class consciousness; he possessed what historian Mike Davis terms a "schizophrenic consciousness" that combined "hatred of the silk-stocking rich" with "equal resentment against Blacks."[162] As this strange career of a white populist illustrates, a fuller understanding of the origins, possibilities, and shortcomings of early farmer-labor radicalism—both its internal contradictions and the external antagonists—entails a closer look at the borderland as a place where North and South, farm and factory, Republican and Democrat, bondage and exclusion, converged. It was also a place where physical relation to slavery's border—and the use of that border as an instrument of racial panic and class control—continued to shape politics well after slavery's end, producing its own distinctive feeder to the crooked path of postwar unionism. With one foot in Jackson's America and another in the Gilded Age, Kuykendall's insurgency reveals the awkward relationship between a regionally insular and racially restrictive congressional campaign and what became a "third-way" project that attempted momentarily—and feebly—to unify disgruntled "producers" across the color line.

Perhaps unknowingly, and despite his unrepentant white supremacy and eventual marginalization, Kuykendall's journey down the path of class-based politics helped create the political space to popularize ideas that would, in the hands of others, ultimately relegate white identity to a secondary status in favor of some form of interracial comity. When Alson Streeter won the Greenback-Labor gubernatorial nomination at the state party convention in Springfield in 1880, he was placed in candidacy by a Black delegate, Alphabetical Washington Jr.[163] It was the by-product—in ways intended and not—of a transforming free labor vision.

CHAPTER 6

Exorcizing the Ghost

In the borderland and across the nation, the year 1886 exposed the promises and pitfalls of labor organization under an advanced and pathbreaking body, the Knights of Labor. In Evansville, where belching smokestacks and squalid tenements signaled a new economic order, class-based interracialism surfaced in fits and starts. Artisans launched the first industrial council in 1873, and it included more than a thousand iron molders, carpenters, coopers, blacksmiths, and cigar makers.[1] Seven years later, native-born coal miners on the city's west side founded the first K of L assembly, and they were soon joined by cotton mill workers. The result was a wave of labor activity through strikes, alliances with German socialists, and boycotts against non-union shops and prison-made goods.

A revived assortment of trade unionists established the city's Central Labor Union in November 1885, and two months later, more than seventy-five African American hod carriers convened in Beecher's Hall. Aided by a handful of white organizers, including Knight disciples Emil Levy and Charles Spalding, the formation of the all-Black Abraham Lincoln Assembly was part of an unprecedentedly comprehensive stage of worker organization, highlighted by an immense May Day procession in which "every kind and degree of laborer," including hundreds of Union veterans, demonstrated for an eight-hour day.[2] Republican leaders responded to the increased militancy by charging the Knights with "communistic" and "un-American" conduct, part of a national wave of reaction culminating with what historian James Green calls "the nation's first red scare."[3] Although the involvement of non-workers, particularly through the Union Labor Party, fostered factionalism within the Knights

and sapped the movement of some of its radicalism, their eventual absorption into the Democratic Party also legitimized labor activism as never before, exposing middle-class voters to a range of workerist issues. As historian Lawrence Lipin argues, by the late 1880s Evansville Democrats were speaking "a language of class" rooted in Knight culture, and had begun to "systematically defend the right of unions to act against local employers."[4]

The road to interracial working-class cooperation in a region where elites disciplined toilers through border coercion proved rocky. The peak of the Knights in Evansville, roughly two thousand strong in the spring of 1886, was the consummation of more than a decade of workers learning how to subordinate "skill" and section, and to a lesser extent race and gender, to the interests of a wider array of producers. The Knights understood that a panoramic labor movement posed the greatest threat to capitalist domination, and achieving it would require that class relations be the primary or sole locus of inclusion. Many Black workers, such as the city's hod carriers, also recognized the Knights' strategy as a meaningful defiance of the color line. Of course, the cogency of this alignment of worker interests had challenged white workers to jettison "free white labor" as an agrarian-artisan ideal—one that by the end of Reconstruction was increasingly at odds with both the permanence and cosmopolitanism of wage work under industrial capitalism.

Though the vastness of Evansville's German population and its embeddedness within the working class enabled wage-earners to sidestep some of the ethnic fragmentation that frustrated class unity in other cities, labor republicanism was often predicated on racial illiberalism, as editors exploited racial and labor unrest by combining trade union with anti-Black politics. Meanwhile, anti-union employers, largely Protestant and native-born, held sway among Republicans, who were transforming into the party of temperance, hard money, and fiscal conservatism.[5] Party stalwarts took particular aim at the so-called poor white Copperheads, "Popish" Germans, and "hard liquor" Irish day laborers. Complaining that reduced railroad employment had increased the city's criminal element, the *Evansville Journal* ridiculed the recently arrested as a foreign stew of drudgers named "Calaghan, Branaghan, Hologhan, Mulligan, Dunigan, Cranigan, and Lanigan."[6] Put simply, any interracial labor movement would have to traverse a political landscape that increasingly pitted Democratic racism against Republican classism and nativism, with ethnicity and partisan identity reinforcing one another.[7] Even so, the class discourse unleashed by Democrats and the pragmatic inclusion it often engendered had the potential to push workers beyond the party's tradi-

tional white racial confines—to backfire, in some cases—and toward greater radicalism within the Greenback or Socialist Labor parties, as well as the Knights of Labor.[8]

However, with Reconstruction waning and economic depression looming, what Friedrich Engels would describe as "the first national organization created by the American working class as a whole" remained a distant and unlikely prospect.[9] More immediately, fatigue of sectionalism and indifference toward Black rights combined with the Panic of 1873 to revive and recalibrate longstanding fears that African Americans would "degrade white labor." Growing inequality gave added urgency to scarcity rhetoric, compelling white wage earners to sharpen the distinctions between themselves and Black "competitors" and exaggerate the role of race in the workplace "replacement" equation. This was the case in Murphysboro, Illinois, in 1872, where operators reportedly dismissed fifty miners and replaced them with "imported negroes" from Richmond, Virginia.[10] The practice spread rapidly, as did the popular association between "Black" and "strikebreaker." Owners employed African American strikebreakers in east central Indiana in 1874, then in greater numbers in Ohio and Illinois. Although union miners viewed these "scabs" as class traitors, many saw the use of Black strikebreakers as a double insult, a sentiment that managers both recognized and exploited. When the operators of the Jackson Coal Company, near Brazil, Indiana, warned strikers to desist lest they be fired and their jobs "immediately filled by colored laborers," the implication being that the racial makeup of their prospective replacements contributed to the union miners' sense of being degraded, miners responded by setting fire to two shafts—by destroying the means of production rather than accept either the material or racial terms of ownership.[11]

Worker militancy was among several trends invigorating classist regional tropes concerning "Egyptian darkness." The "Bloody Vendetta" in Franklin, Jackson, and Williamson counties saw longstanding "feuds" take on increasingly partisan dimensions as the interlacing forces of economic transformation, racial change, and intense two-party competition engendered new kinds of extralegal violence.[12] At the ballot box, Republicans initially made sizable gains owing to the growing numbers of freedpeople and staunch Unionists converted by the war to the party of "loyalty" and Lincoln.[13] Democrats were soon resurgent, however, as Liberal Republicanism proved a bridge for ephemeral Republicans back into the party of Jackson and Douglas.[14] The election of 1872 saw Cincinnati, which had gone Republican since 1860, flip back to the Democrats. In Indiana, backsliding Republicans accused Demo-

crats of driving disenfranchising African Americans and delivering the votes of "Kentucky white trash" to overturn Reconstruction; revived Democrats, meanwhile, charged their opponents with "colonizing" the state by importing Blacks from the South.[15]

Black workers across the borderland faced the racial Thermidor by leveraging mobility and, at times, the refusal to work as economic bargaining chips. In Cairo, deckhands and levee workers gained a reputation as "unruly," which was code for non-compliant labor. Men in brickyards and grain mills, too, carved out autonomous spaces and asserted their rights as workers when and where they could. The lower pay of menial labor as a result of racial discrimination, referred to by whites as "negro work," led African American toilers to "vote with their feet" when possible. In Pulaski and Alexander counties, whose respective Black populations jumped from thirty-nine and fifty-five in 1860 to 2,394 and 2,296 in 1870 to become the second and third most heavily African American counties in the state, workers of color seized wage-earning opportunities as profit-minded owners exploited slavery's diaspora.[16] Mound City gained a reputation as a place where white industrialists welcomed the influx of Black labor, engendering further cries of racial replacement.[17] Benjamin Franklin Mason, who owned more than two thousand acres of land in Pulaski and Johnson counties and whose sawmill cut lumber for railroad companies, hired Black workers from Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, and Louisiana. Mason's mill was perhaps something of a haven for the formerly enslaved, offering steady employment and relative security within a growing Black community. For Mason, however, the postwar labor surplus meant cost savings. He typically paid his employees in produce and goods rather than cash, as little as $1.00 per day, and sold them other basic necessities, effectively using his workforce as a built-in market for the goods they produced.[18]

Freedpeople were not the only ones muddling the free white labor consensus. By the 1870s, insurgent third parties accused both Democrats and Republicans of promoting various forms of "cheap labor" that were neither free nor white. These included the short-lived Independent Reform or Anti-Monopoly Party, which briefly overtook both major parties in southeastern Illinois in 1874 and sent former Democrat William B. Anderson of Mt. Vernon to Congress.[19] Founded as the Independent Party by Indiana farmers following the Panic of 1873, what became the Greenback-Labor Party also injected populism into the "free labor" question. With roots in the Lower Midwest, by 1880 Greenbackers endorsed a federal income tax, the eight-hour work-

day, women's suffrage, and the nationalization of certain industries. Many also supported interracial organizing. As a disputed presidential election hastened the end of Reconstruction in 1876, the party garnered between 12 and 27 percent support in the Little Egypt counties of Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jefferson, Saline, Wayne, and White, where anti-bankers were known as "Log Rollers."[20] In the 19th Congressional District of southeastern Illinois, the Greenback congressional candidate won 26 percent of the vote, nearly as much as the Republican but well behind Democratic victor Richard W. Townshend of Shawneetown.[21]

Townshend, too, campaigned against the growing power of big business, warning that western farmers were experiencing "enslavement under the power of corporated capital." Yet Townshend's idealized agrarian was racially qualified, and he viewed Chinese immigrants as especially "debased."[22] Part of a national wave of Sinophobia, countless borderlanders feared that far-off "coolie" workers would eventually penetrate their communities. They argued that "Mongolian" or "chink slavery" betrayed the legacy of the war by driving down wages and reducing white workers—those "who salute no employer as 'master'"—to a state of "enslavement."[23] For former War Democrats who shifted temporarily to the party of Lincoln but remained ambivalent toward economic elites and non-white people, Independent Reformism and Greenbackism proved expedient bridges back into the economically populist wing of Townshend's Democracy.

The Republican Party was also changing. The decline of Radicals in Congress alongside industrial and westward expansion led party leaders to increasingly embrace property, big business, and "hard" racism against Indians at the expense of Black rights. As David Roediger argues, "If there had been merely two wings of the Republican Party—one pro-justice and the other pro-development—that would have produced drama enough. Instead, the party's 'warring ideals' often existed also inside the brain of the same individual Republican leader or voter." And when profit came into conflict with racial justice, the former won out, producing a "lily-white" movement within the party.[24] In Evansville, where Blacks held only menial political appointments despite a sizable population and unflinching party loyalty, the Republican *Journal* declared Reconstruction over with the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment.[25] More and more, former Lincoln men echoed Democratic fears of Black migration and racial intermixing and scolded African American voters who did not follow their lead. When a Black delegation in Chillicothe, Ohio, led by Peter H. Clark, refused in 1873 to pass a resolution endorsing

Ulysses S. Grant, white Republicans compared this entitled "colored aristocracy" to Democratic "white trash."[26]

The great retreat from war-era idealism not only distanced the party from civil and labor rights, it also accelerated regionalized class stereotypes. Observers noted the continuation of a "deplorable system of caste" in the Midwest, with the "Brahmin or Northern" middle class situated above upland southerners.[27] By 1870, the average valuation of wealth and personal property remained roughly one-third lower in southern Illinois than in the rest of the state. Residents of the deepest southern counties, Pulaski being the poorest, possessed, on average, roughly one-third of the personal wealth of other Illinoisans.[28] In a feedback loop, depictions of Little Egypt as "backward" reinforced the region's commercial isolation, thus perpetuating additional stigmas regarding underdevelopment. Held in Evansville in August 1869, a series of public speeches concerning the construction of an Evansville, Carmi, & Paducah Railroad highlighted such prejudices. One of the project's opponents, a prominent judge, ushered a general warning about building public works across the Wabash. "That part of Illinois was settled by poor white trash," he explained, "who were so poverty stricken that they had to live on chestnuts." He declared that southern Illinois was still "the poorest place in God's country" and therefore not suitable for large-scale investment."[29] Traveling through Egypt in 1875, a Chicago correspondent detailed the lasting imprint of "hill culture" as one of

> dirty roughs, clad in tow shirts, butternut homespun, and cowhide boots, hanging round the "drug stores" (here the grog shops are so designated), to drink benzine, discuss who is the "best man," and, if enough benzine have been consumed, to settle that great question by fighting it out then and there. Men, as one soon learns of them, who are born bullies, every mother's son of them, and are so proud of nothing as having knocked down some other man, and, while he was down, kicked, chocked, bit, and gouged him until the victor has spent his strength and his rage.[30]

Republican editors capitalized on partisan debates over Reconstruction to perpetuate a narrative that linked poverty to idleness and ignorance to party affiliation in "the American Egypt." Describing the region's people as swamp-dwelling, mule-riding, and "saturated with alcohol and smoked with tobacco," commentators applied racial characteristics to its supposedly "savage" and "barbarous" inhabitants.[31] Citing massive resistance to Black

rights and mobility within the region, the *Chicago Tribune* asserted that the place once labeled "the outlying provinces of the empire of slavery" remained a "dark, benighted" locale, "where brutal prejudice against the colored citizens is intensified by dense ignorance."[32] In fact, the *Tribune* seized disputes over federal policy in the South to historicize southern Illinois and recast the provenance of the region's nickname, avowing that it emerged from the crudeness of its citizens. Endorsing the purported studies of philologist William A. Wheeler of Boston, the editor insisted that the "Egypt" label dated to the 1850s and was given by Republicans owing to the large number of citizens who could neither read nor write. Wheeler and the *Tribune* defined "Egypt" as such:

> Egypt.—A cant popular designation of the southern portion of the State of Illinois—being a figurative allusion to the "thick darkness" in which ancient Egypt was involved for three days in the time of Moses. The inhabitants of Southern Illinois have had the general reputation of being extremely ignorant.[33]

Class conflict consistently disrupted Republican notions of upland backwardness and Democratic appeals to white solidarity. The Great Railroad Strike of 1877 threatened the color line yet was marked by an absence of overarching institutions and goals. Worker resistance, through either strikes or mass meetings in support of the stoppages, broke out in Cincinnati, Terre Haute, Vandalia, Mattoon, and Evansville. It also occurred in the deepest recesses of Little Egypt. White and Black coal miners in Du Quoin walked off the job.[34] In Carbondale, a crowd of two hundred diggers and unemployed—"tramps" and "idlers"—congregated at the rail depot and awaited coordinated action.[35] State officials deputized "leading citizens," including former Union commanders Michael K. Lawler and John M. Crebs, to prevent workers from seizing railroad property in Gallatin and White counties.[36]

Perhaps the boldest undertaking occurred in Cairo, where between fifty and one hundred Black wage earners met on the Ohio River levee on the evening of July 30 to sync with the worker actions upriver in St. Louis. Characterized by the press as a "mob" of "negro roustabouts," they elected a leadership committee, urged employees of the Mississippi Valley Transportation Company to refuse work, then planned to shut down the city's mills, cooper shops, and box factory the following morning. Management acceded to the demands of the striking deckhands. However, threats of violence by white city

leadership, broadcast through the news media, combined with an absence of support among local white workers, undermined the planned general strike.[37]

The most transformational events, however, occurred just beyond Little Egypt, in Madison and St. Clair counties. These former antislavery hubs and centers of industrial militancy served as appendages of the St. Louis Commune. East St. Louis rail and factory workers, eventually supported by hundreds of armed miners across the county, took control of rail and telegraph lines. In a particularly dramatic moment during a week that was filled with them, more than one thousand workingmen convened at the city's train depot and announced their support for a general strike. Singing "La Marseillaise," socialist leaders from St. Louis, including Peter Lofgreen, Albert Currlin, and Henry F. Allen, crossed the Mississippi River to help rally the cause. In one of the most revolutionary instances in the history of the nation's working class, strikers transcended the old sectional border and the color line to take control of a major U.S. metropolitan area.[38] Southern Illinois socialists, including chair of the strikers' executive committee Harry Eastman, helped direct the drama. The pro-strike posture of civic leaders in East St. Louis, including Mayor John Bowman and attorney Luke Hite, who gave a speech during the stoppage declaring a war between capital and labor, offered evidence of a broad and popular workers' movement.[39] In fact, community support for the walkout ran deeper in Illinois than it did across the river, where local alliances of owners, politicians, and civil servants—whose agencies and institutions were less racially inclusive than the striking workers—stamped out the "American Commune" of "thirty thousand socialists" and "notorious Negroes."[40]

ALTHOUGH VIOLENTLY SUPPRESSED BY AN unholy covenant between business elites and state forces, the 1877 uprising's incorporation of workers across industry, regional, and racial lines prefigured the general union momentum of the 1880s. Founded in 1869 as the Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor, a new federation transcended Workingmen's and Socialist Labor Party parochialism by shedding their doctrinaire Marxism while retaining their interracial and industrial form. By the mid-1880s, and under the leadership of Terence V. Powderly, the Knights had become what historian Leon Fink describes as "the first mass organization of the American working class."[41] Cultivating a labor republican ideology that promoted cooperative organization as a replacement for the dominative system of "wage

slavery," Knights wielded power through autonomous and community-based assemblies that combined boycotts and selected strikes to, in the words of one southern Indianan, "shake off and counteract the oppressive action of an oligarchy now threatening the existence of democratic government."[42] They ran political tickets in Cincinnati, Dayton, New Albany, Evansville, Vincennes, Cairo, and East St. Louis, eventually preaching the inclusion of all "producers of wealth" regardless of race, gender, and "skill" level.[43] Assemblies sprang up in small towns, too. Members hoped that agrarian reform might "lighten up" so-called benighted parts of the borderland and offset what one Hoosier Knight described as the unfortunate stereotype among "city fellows" that rural people were "a dull, heavy mass of stupidity and conservatism."[44]

Industrial unionists sought to realize the promise of free labor by forging what Mike Davis calls a "parallel proletarian civil society." Effectively doing so required a "landmark reconciliation" between native and foreign-born workers and the inclusion of women and African Americans. The result was an often resounding "alternative to dominant ethno-religious subcultures" that constituted a "pioneering" rejection of the borderland's free white labor consensus.[45] Granted, the presence of non-white members and delegates by no means equated to racial equality, as the Knights' republican ethos and its suspicion of those without a stake in the system sometimes framed Black slaves as the antithesis of white (which is to say *true*) workers.[46] And although the Knights espoused an official policy of racial inclusion, in practice, they often discouraged or barred Black membership, particularly in the South.

National leadership also proved ambivalent toward the race-specific oppression faced by Knights both within and outside the organization, as evidenced by the establishment of segregated local assemblies and the refusal of national offices to aid local Black struggles.[47] In other words, white Knights understood that the only way to win meaningful concessions from owners was through comity or a multitudinous class program. It remained to be seen whether that program could solidarize enough to foreground issues unique to the oppression of Black toilers, which, through time and travail, might necessarily involve widening the terrain of class struggle, rejecting the very notion of whiteness, or indicting the capitalist system itself.

By the 1880s, labor organizations across the borderland were more racially integrated than business owners' associations or, in all likelihood, Union veterans' organizations.[48] In greater abundance—though not greater ideological commitment—than either abolitionist societies or Quaker and antislavery congregations, the Knights soon became the region's first large-scale interra-

cial institution. They organized hundreds of local assemblies from Hocking County in southeastern Ohio to Jeffersonville and New Albany, on the opposite shore from Louisville, to East St. Louis. Enrollment soared in Cincinnati, where roughly 35 percent of the city's labor force struck for the eight-hour workday during the May Day Strikes of 1886. The Knight ranks swelled to 17,000 in the following months, and delegates, along with members of the Agricultural Wheel, the Farmers' Alliance, and the remnants of the defunct Greenback-Labor Party, helped convene a National Industrial Union Conference to establish a new party on the banks of the Ohio.[49]

The Union Labor Party founding convention, held at Cincinnati's Music Hall in February 1887, was a testament to the region's depth of radical working-class politics, highlighting their potential and limitations. An overlapping assortment of Knights, Greenbackers, Alliancemen, trade unionists, socialists, suffragists, and former abolitionists, the conventioneers sought public ownership of communications and transportation systems. They also seated ten female delegates, four of whom gave speeches. Celebrated reformers, including socialist Marion Todd of Chicago and freethinker Juliet H. Severance of Milwaukee, voiced that although workingmen might indeed be slaves, their wives remained "the slaves of slaves."

Organizers also invited Black delegates, including New York journalist T. Thomas Fortune, who had recently published an influential study of the African American "labor problem," in which he criticized craft union racism and rightly noted the American public's curious tolerance of white worker organizing compared to that of "boisterous" Black agrarians in the Reconstruction South.[50] Although Fortune declined the invitation because he was not a member of any labor association, he expressed enthusiastic support for biracial unions and worker agitation. "The colored people of this country are essentially a laboring class," Fortune explained, "and I rejoice at the constant evidence we have that they and their white brethren of toil are drawing closer and closer together."[51]

However, the convention never aspired to social leveling. Speakers trafficked in red scaring—now the backbeat of mainstream political discourse—and party leaders Alson J. Streeter and Melanchon C. Lockwood claimed to represent not poor or working-class Americans but the amorphous "middle class of society."[52] The conventioneers' efforts at class unity through racial and gender inclusion were also mixed. Female delegates successfully pressed for a women's suffrage plank, despite resistance from white southerners (who also objected to the word "Union" in the party title), as well as a commitment to equal pay for equal work between the sexes. But the party's "equality" plank

referred only to voting rights irrespective of sex and, in addition to featuring no Black speakers, representatives passed no race-specific provisions.[53] And though the conference's most radical declaration affirmed universal kinship among working people, which would render it "impossible for despots to array the workingmen of one country in a war against their brothers in another country," delegates adjourned by endorsing a national law to "exclude from America the Mongolian slave and Asiatic competition."[54]

Cincinnati, with its progress and pitfalls, was the epicenter of radical politics and Knight activity in the Lower Midwest, but organization elsewhere was proportionally similar. By 1886, there were so many eager volunteers in New Albany that no meeting hall in the city could accommodate them.[55] Downriver in Evansville, Knights began to organize in 1880 and instituted a wide-ranging strategy of boycotts, strikes, and electoral advocacy. The city soon tallied fourteen active assemblies as labor influence moved from heavily German tradesmen toward "unskilled" and traditionally underrepresented workers. The formation of the Central Labor Union in November 1885 facilitated new craft organization—of painters, plasterers, bricklayers, harness makers, musicians, stonecutters, bakers, tailors, and, above all, furniture workers—alongside the Knights' swelling ranks.[56] In southern Illinois, meanwhile, Knights formed chapters in the small cities of Mt. Vernon, Centralia, and Harrisburg, as well as towns like Grayville, Birkner, St. Francisville, Cobden, Rosiclare, New Burnside, and Wolf Creek, whose assembly was a mix of farm hands and lumbermen.[57]

In many cases, such as in Belleville, members organized with the Farmers' Alliance, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the Farmers' Mutual Benefit Association and often shared commemorative space with the Grand Army of the Republic.[58] The Knights established bands of zinc smelters in Collinsville, printers and coopers in Alton, coal miners in Sparta, farmers in Turkey Hill, female housekeepers in Du Quoin, and mixed-sex bodies of assorted laborers in Metropolis and Sandusky.[59] The small rail and farming city of Carmi, population 2,500, boasted a lodge of roughly two hundred members.[60] Neighboring Gallatin County, an equally rural and heavily Democratic area where rail, river, and mining industries converged, accommodated four lodges, with one of Shawneetown's composed entirely of women.[61]

Everywhere, Knights risked ostracism. Employers fired and blacklisted some members; others they threatened to replace with convict, Black, or immigrant workers.[62] The proprietors of Champion Reaper Works in Springfield, Ohio, where foremen had summarily dismissed unionists, called the

Order an agent of "terror, intimidation, and tyranny."[63] In Mt. Carmel, Illinois, Republican leaders combined red and Black scare by painting the Knights as anarchists who would turn honest white workingmen into "abject slaves."[64] Across the Wabash River in southwestern Indiana, industrialists terminated Knights and those who consorted with them.[65] K of L victories in 1885 and 1886 spurred business leaders to become even more confrontational, particularly after Chicago's Haymarket bombing, which resulted in the frame-up and execution of the city's leading anarchists.

In addition to leveraging legislative and legal powers, owners employed the cultural apparatuses of print and pulpit to subject the Knights to withering xenophobic attacks. They charged unionists with un-Americanness, undemocratic secrecy, and other stereotypes associated with the immigrant and urban Catholic working class. When the K of L began a series of economic boycotts in early 1886, Evansville Republicans recommended they refuse liquor instead, as the true enemy of the city's Knights was not the capitalist but "John Barleycorn" and the lure of intoxicating drink.[66] Despite being branded an "alien" body, and perhaps in response to nativist attacks, Knight assemblies enthusiastically appropriated nationalist symbols and holidays, including the legacies of the American Revolution and the War of the Rebellion, often for the purpose of immigrant exclusion. Hoping to "close the gates" to impede the incoming "hordes" of Europeans, the Knights also advocated "restrictive legislation" and, in Terence Powderly's words, "the total exclusion" of all non-self-supporting immigrants to control the labor market and safeguard native-born workers.[67]

The Knights' approach to racial segregation also varied, as some of the most emphatic organizational activity occurred in notorious anti-Black regions. The early 1880s saw intense labor conflict in the coal fields near Cannelburg, Indiana, where bosses complained that they could not find "the right kind of men" (presumably non-union) and locked out several hundred Knights in late 1882. Two years later, the Knights bought the Cannelburg Coal Company and ran it for two years as a cooperative. It was and would remain the K of L's only collectively owned and self-managed enterprise in the country.[68] Moreover, this participatory democracy occurred in an area where it was effectively illegal in many communities for Black people to reside, making it a noble experiment in bottom-up autonomism in a region devoted to rigidly top-down racial apartheid.[69] Within a fifty-mile radius of Cannelburg, Shoals, English, Odon, Jasper, Loogootee, and Huntington were all confirmed or probable sundown towns.[70] Some proximate counties banned Blacks entirely. White Democrats had driven out the Black residents of Washington during

the war, and the county remained entirely white for more than a century; by Reconstruction, it was "established policy" through "unwritten law" that Black people were not allowed to reside in Crawford County owing in part to the perception that they would undermine white labor. Nearby Greene County, meanwhile, reportedly went sundown after operators used Black strikebreakers as replacement workers during a coal miners' strike.[71]

Cultures of exclusion at times strengthened labor's position, at least momentarily, by generating uniformity among workers and allowing organizers to circumvent thorny questions of racial heterogeneity, and discouraging owners from importing non-white strikebreakers. There is also evidence that, at least in some cases, the strength of white labor unions correlated with the frequency of violence against African Americans.[72] In most instances, however, African American restriction and subordination reinforced overall worker incoherence. The persistence of white identity—effectively turning local Knight assemblies into racial as well as class federations—surely weakened the movement as a whole by limiting its organizational horizons, breathing continuous life into the practice of racial separation, and equating union work with "white" skin.

There were other paradoxes to the presence of an interracial organization in a region of historical and acute racial restriction, prompting haphazard approaches to the "negro question." Knights in the Lower Midwest remained conscious of their proximity to the South's pliable labor pool. Activists, including state lecturer Benjamin W. Goodhue at Du Quoin, cautioned against "imported" labor to break down wages.[73] Concurrently, unionists in Belleville accused capitalists of preaching sectional reconciliation to exploit "cheap labor" in the South.[74] Even so, the Knights generally proved exceptional in their stated institutional strategy of organizing Black workers rather than frantically marking them as "invaders."

One might expect Knights across the borderland to have seized and expanded on Powderly's anti-immigrant rhetoric by fitting it into preexisting cultures of exclusion through a firm whites-only policy. Some white Knights indeed refused to work alongside Blacks and would have preferred a stricter race-based protocol. There were also widely circulating rumors, such as that, in 1894, leading Knights hoped to "deport the negro to central Africa" to ameliorate labor competition. Powderly later met with a reporter from the *Conservator*, one of Chicago's Black newspapers, to deny the claims.[75] However, the national organization's basic wall-to-wall outlook mostly held firm throughout the region, even when white members viewed Black compatri-

ots as, in the words of African American congressman John R. Lynch, mere "tools."[76] Although the Order rejected immigrants "because they *were* a competitive threat," according to historian Joseph Gerteis, it incorporated Blacks "or else they *would be* competitors."[77]

Put another way, Knight leadership saw African Americans, unlike the recently arrived Chinese, as a fully anchored segment of the nation's working class, and recognized that their interests lay with Black workers in the union as allies rather than outside the union as potential rivals. As the *Journal of United Labor* explained in 1880, "We should be false to every principle of our Order should we exclude from membership any man who gains his living by honest toil, on account of his color or creed." Whether or not mine owners strategically headhunted and hired African Americans to foment racial animus, Knight leadership understood that the prevalence of Black strikebreakers in the borderland, exaggerated though it often was, might lead white miners to resist the inclusion of Black workers into the K of L. Speaking directly to white coal diggers in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, the *Journal* framed interracialism as a matter of self preservation: "Why should workingmen allow a foolish prejudice against color to keep out of our organization anyone who might be used as a tool to aid the employer in grinding down wages?"[78]

The fact that Knight chapters in the Lower Midwest were racially segregated but not racially prohibitive also owed to Black self-activity within an organization that, while not egalitarian, nevertheless provided them an opportunity to directly improve their lives and livelihoods. Some Black elites, conservative and accommodationist, discouraged unionization within the Knights as not "respectable."[79] However, the majority of Black workers appreciated, as race leaders including Lynch and Frederick Douglass argued, that workers of all races had more in common than not, that sustained and far-reaching worker power must be encompassing, and that racial restriction was a cause as well as a symptom of white supremacy. In that sense, most Black employees stood to gain more in practical terms by fighting for access to and greater equality within the Knights and other white-led unions than they did by rejecting them or retreating into separate organizations. African Americans entered the Order and rose to positions of local and national leadership despite persistent racism, organizing assemblies in major cities including Cincinnati, Evansville, and Paducah, as well as smaller communities like Murphysboro, Illinois, where Knights held gatherings open to the general public and people of all races.[80]

Even where assemblies were segregated by race, meetings were often interracial, sometimes in defiance of local racial etiquette. At the very least, Knights

in Evansville and elsewhere indulged what one editor termed "the commingling of white and colored people" and "the social intercourse of the races."[81] The formation of the African American "Lincoln Assembly" in February 1886, when white organizers joined Black hod carriers in commemorating the Great Emancipator's birthday, was one of many interracial events and celebrations.[82] For instance, although their assemblies tended to meet separately, it was common for white and Black Knights to march together and in common cause. As noted, Evansvillians witnessed the largest labor demonstration in the city's history on May Day 1886, when a mighty procession of more than two thousand workingmen demonstrated for an eight-hour workday. While a cavalcade of craft unionists, headed by the massive Furniture Workers' and Iron Molders' unions, made their way to Garvin Park, the Knights led a separate, interracial faction through the city's downtown to Blankenburg Grove, ushered by both white and Black bands, which Democrats applauded for its absence of "communist agitators" and "socialistic banners."[83] And when in the days that followed news broke of the Haymarket bombing in Chicago, Evansville's Knights issued a statement that condemned anarchism and framed America's labor divide as one between native and foreign-born rather than Black and white workers. In lieu of racial uniformity, city assemblies called for the barring of "degraded laborers of foreign countries [who] take the places of American workmen" as economic patriotism supplanted white nationalism.[84]

In fact, Knight parades "knocked down numerous social barriers" throughout the borderland, according to historian Robert E. Weir. Billed as "the largest labor demonstration ever held" in the region and hosted in "the greatest manufacturing city, in proportion to its population, in the world," one column in Springfield, Ohio, drew more than three thousand marchers, roughly four hundred of them working women from Cincinnati's Hannah Powderly Assembly.[85] A rally in Princeton, Indiana, in August 1886, held to celebrate "the wage workers of southern Hoosierdom," reveals how the organization bridged the races in the region's predominantly or exclusively white small towns. In the case of Princeton, an estimated thousand Evansvillians made the twenty-mile journey to the mining community of roughly three thousand residents, which Knights had selected for the event because of its rail connections and recently refurbished town square. Upon arrival, participants were greeted at the train depot by Carter's Orchestra, a locally popular African American band led by violinist and barber shop owner Gus Carter, and filed into ranks of marchers that included two Black glee clubs, seventy Black Knights, and an assortment of other Black workers, including well

diggers, hod carriers, and coal miners. Although white toilers outnumbered African Americans, with more than three hundred white Knights partaking, Evansville's Black Knights were bestowed the honor of heading the parade, striding behind only the marshal and a handful of local officials.

The parade culminated at the fairgrounds, where officials read letters of regret and support from Powderly, Trevellick, and Blanche K. Bruce, the first African American to serve a full term in the U.S. Senate. The principal speaker was Jesse Harper of Illinois, a former associate of Abraham Lincoln who joined the Greenback Party in 1876 because the Republicans had become "an ally of the great robber baron monopolies."[86] Orating for nearly two hours in the blazing sun, Harper appealed to his integrated audience through antislavery and Civil War memory by quoting the sixteenth president and, in a bold repudiation of Social Darwinism, proclaiming that the idea that some men were simply born to work for low wages was similar to the flawed notion that "the nigger was made to raise cotton." Harper proclaimed to great applause, "The laws on railroads, telegraph, public lands, the national banks and money are against the interests of the American people, and if these laws are not modified they will be trampled out as we did slavery."

Perhaps the most striking speech, however, was delivered by Mayor Levin W. Gudgel. The Republican attorney made race and emancipation the centerpiece of his address by comparing Knights to abolitionists and linking Black-white worker unity to interracial alliance during the War of the Rebellion. Now, Gudgel alleged, "an alarming development of the great capitalistic corporations" threatened to unmake Lincoln's ideals by reducing all workers, Black and white, to propertyless "servants" barely above the level of slavery. This "pauperization of the toiling masses" affected men and women alike, forced their children into mines and factories, inhibited domestic savings, and prevented them from housing, schooling, feeding, and clothing their families. Despite the presence of segregated chapters and an air of paternalism among the white speechmakers, the day's overriding themes were that the legacies of the Union Cause and Black liberation could only be preserved through far-reaching cooperation among producers. In that sense, Harper and Gudgel's messages, which tied slave liberty to economic reform and suggested that corporate capitalism had undermined the implied promises of Reconstruction, were more than opportunistic responses to crowds of Black workers. They reveal both the importance of Civil War memory to Knight culture and how that culture, even in small-scale industrial towns in southern Indiana, proved distinct in its level of African American inclusion.[87]

Yet such inclusion—subversive in its time and place—did not sufficiently stem the inexorable tide of reaction and repression. The Knights were a shrinking and increasingly rural organization when the National Union Conference met in Cincinnati's Music Hall in May 1891, forming the basis of what would become the People's Party. The "great industrial army" of nearly 1,500 delegates, most of whom hailed from Ohio, Indiana, and Kansas, were a veritable "who's who" of labor, agrarian, temperance, woman suffrage, and Greenback campaigns: James B. Weaver, Ignatius Donnelly, Jerry Simpson, Jesse Harper, Robert Schilling, Helen M. Gougar, and Marion Todd.[88] The assembly also included a host of southern representatives and a handful of Black delegates headquartered at the Knights of Labor hall on Walnut Street.[89]

The yearning for common ground among these disparate groups and the juxtaposition of Union and Confederate veterans set the stage for a spontaneous outburst of rapport. When a plank concerning soldier pay was greeted by the "rebel yell," James Harvey Davis of Texas gave an impromptu speech lauding the convention as a turning point in the history of North-South relations. Before Davis could return to his seat, Union veteran Thomas Wadsworth of Indiana jumped to his feet, grasped the Texan's hand, and proclaimed that Union and Confederate soldiers must now come together against "a common foe more formidable than the rebellion." Wadsworth explained that soldiers who once wore blue and gray had both been "duped" since the war, while "trickster" capitalists had exploited sectional divisions for self-enrichment. Great applause rose across the gallery, followed by calls to "bury the bloody hatchet and shake hands across the bloody chasm." Other delegates began to join in the unplanned performance, and when Davis reappeared on the convention stage donning the stars and stripes, a Black delegate accompanied him, bearing his own U.S. flag. According to one witness, "The cheering was deafening [and] the conference seemed crazed with joy . . . suddenly a movement of state banners started toward the stage, forming the tableau of restored friendship between the North and South."[90]

Some measure of sectional healing was to be expected. Indeed, the success of a national class-based political movement depended on quashing both the "bloody shirt" and cries of "negro rule."[91] However, the path toward reunion laid out during the Populist Convention (as it became known) was not entirely harmonious. Amid this orgy of rapprochement, it was brought to the body's attention that African Americans, though not restricted by convention policy, were nevertheless hindered by practical considerations of resources and distance. One unnamed Black Allianceman from South Carolina explained that

the vast majority of African American farmers resided in the South, and few Black organizations possessed the money to send delegates to party meetings and far-off congresses.[92] The Black delegate's comments were noted with curiosity, if not concern, and white deputies "passed the hat" for their Black comrades.

Yet the South Carolinian's basic point regarding the secondary status of Blacks within the farmer-labor movement and racism as an added form of oppression that had especially dire material consequences for poor and working-class Blacks, went unanswered. In fact, the Cincinnati convention's blueprint for reunion and racial cooperation devoid of African American representation in leadership or race-specific policies challenging segregation laws reflected the Populists' tepid approach toward the "negro question." Despite the meeting's rather remarkable episode of nonsectarianism, in which class condition looked momentarily to unify producers across sections, sexes, and races, the scenes in Music Hall also portended and would become subsumed within the wider Blue-Gray reconciliation movement that provided the cultural scaffolding for Jim Crow.

That movement occurred earliest and most often where the physical proximity of North and South was closest, notably the Ohio River Valley, and where it interacted with strata of property and whiteness, reflecting and at times reinforcing systems of labor exploitation and racial exclusion. Class struggle necessitated a softening of wartime passions, to be sure, but there was an ever-present symbiosis between memory and power. In that sense, labor reconciliation often slid toward a white-dominant nostalgia that sequestered or overwhelmed the African American meaning of the war as an unconsummated fight for justice.[93] Despite such impediments, what historian Matthew Hild calls "the last best chance for a biracial coalition of the farm, mine, and factory"—defiance of corporate capitalism and the color line—engendered swift retribution from above. [94] Whereas two-party hegemony—Democratic co-optation of agrarian discontent and Republican reputation as "the-party-that-saved-the-Union"—stifled Populist energy in the borderland, naked violence against the People's Party in the South was a testament to the danger white elites perceived in even the faintest veneer of multiracial working-class power.[95] The class-based rapprochement of labor populism, imperfect though it was, receded before more racially exclusive and anti-worker forms of reunion as African Americans became, in the phrasing of C. Vann Woodward, "the scapegoat in the reconciliation of estranged white classes."[96]

By the century's turn, the borderland, like much of the nation, was in full-on racial retreat. The seed of industrial unionism planted by Daniel Weaver and

his miners in Belleville in 1861 had germinated an inclusive national organization of hundreds of thousands of workers, overlapping with a miscellany of reform movements, only to be disciplined from above and absorbed into more structurally restrictive craft unions, or, in the case of coal mining, reformed into a new type of industrial body, the United Mine Workers of America. Worker consiousness and cooperation had posed a direct challenge to corporate profits and entrenched social hierarchies, but in addition to external suppression by organized money men, Associationists, Greenbackers, socialists, Knights, and Populists in the Lower Midwest also grappled continuously with internal fragmentation, often centered on racial division and the region's legacies of exclusion and expulsion. This devolution was tied to national social and political currents, including increasingly sophisticated ideologies of capital that fetishized extreme wealth as virtuous and deserved, demonized poverty as the fault of the individual, and exploited border tropes— "invasions" by perilous "alien" elements—to sharpen cultural differences among races, ethnicities, and national statuses, thus intensifying and particularizing material anxieties while loosening bonds of "producerist" unity.

Peter H. Clark's crusade for a democratic economy, spearheaded by an interracial brotherhood of workingmen, was indeed besieged on all sides. Although fatally crushed by successive waves of capitalist terror and state violence, the radicals' free labor dream had also been compromised by the persistence of racially restrictive ideas and cultures among white workers. The attendant uptick in banishment and bloodshed in the Lower Midwest—the postwar replacement of legal with extralegal exclusion, part and parcel of what some have called "the nadir of American race relations"—was framed and nourished by an elite reaction against postwar labor radicalism, from Reconstruction through Haymarket, that was most effective when it combined red and Black scare tactics. It also emanated from below, however, as racial schism increased in proportion to both real and perceived economic stressors, quickening during the economic depression and labor migrations of the 1890s. Anti-Black group violence involved the full participation of white professionals, who often encouraged and steered negrophobic mobs. Yet intimidation, removal, and lynching also became, in the words of historian Manfred Berg, "a way for lower-class whites to vent their economic frustrations against their black competitors," all while white elites reaped the benefits of a tragically divided proletariat.[97]

PART IV

The Buffer Problem

On the mild fall morning of November 9, 1909, a white woman, twenty-four-year-old Anna H. Pelley, was found dead in a grimy alley in the Midwest's southernmost city, Cairo. Raped and murdered the previous night, Pelley had been choked with a gag in her mouth, her face beaten. Police brought in tracking hounds from Harrisburg, as well as from Charleston, Missouri, and Wickcliffe, Kentucky, just across the great rivers. That afternoon, lawmen arrested William James, a Black delivery man for the Cairo Ice and Coal Company, whom locals called "Froggie." Though the evidence against James was circumstantial, and he never confessed to the crime, a mob reportedly comprising "the best citizens of the city" soon formed and demanded lynch justice.[1]

While authorities earnestly attempted to protect James, even shepherding him out of Cairo via train, enraged throngs assembled in neighboring communities. In Union County, which barred African American residency, whites responded to Pelley's murder by forming parties to attack Black day laborers and quarry workers.[2] Twenty miles away, in the hamlet of Belknap, a different group seized James and returned him to Cairo. There, on the evening of November 11, before a crowd of thousands along Eighth Street and Commercial Avenue in the city center, an assemblage hanged and shot the "black demon" before burning his lifeless body on a pyre. The dancing flames disclosed thousands of onlookers, which one observer described as a "solid mass of humanity" along the streets, rooftops, fence rows, and windows.[3] With James's charred head hacked off and mounted on a pike, some participants proceeded to cut out his heart, distributing pieces as souvenirs. Another sawed off one of his feet. Their bloodlust unquenched, the multitudes returned

to the county jail and seized Henry Salzner, a white photographer suspected of murdering his wife. Like James, Salzner had pleaded innocence, but the unforgiving mob dragged him from his cell and strung up his soon lifeless body from a telephone pole in front of the jail.[4]

Officially, James and Salzner died "at the hands of persons unknown."[5] No one was ever arrested or tried for their executions, even though there were countless witnesses. The lack of legal convictions owed to community consensus regarding the appropriateness of their deaths, a like-mindedness that resulted from the racial and gendered implications of Pelley's killing, promoted and manufactured by prominent narrative creators.[6] The Cairo city newspaper's first description of the victim was that of an "unquestionably pure girl," and the public coroner's report deemed her "a virgin . . . foully violated."[7] Their insinuation about the sanctity of white womanhood helped galvanize a white mob against a Black suspect. The city's clergy, meanwhile, also preached maiden virtue, with one Baptist minister declaring the lynchings an instance of "the women of the community look[ing] to the real manhood of the community for protection."[8] Regional newspapers upped the ante through racialized rape myths that emphasized Pelley's slaying as part of a pattern of "virgin girls ravished and murdered by human hyenas."[9]

Though the hanging of Salzner was an afterthought, it served to perpetuate the comforting fiction among whites that James's lynching was motivated not by race but by the desire to protect the innocent. The *Cairo Bulletin*, for one, was emphatic that the violence constituted not a "race war," but a laudable attempt by Cairo's men to safeguard their women and children.[10] This idea of righteous violence was reinforced by reports that the orderly mob had eschewed property damage and was "led by women" who "sang and screamed in delight" at James's demise.[11] As described in the poem "Wicked Cairo Town," the entire episode—a particularly gruesome double lynching remembered by the white community as a noble defense of femininity—became quickly embedded in the region's oral folklore, betraying the complex relationship between race and gender, as well as group violence and political borders.[12] When asked if it was possible to swim the Ohio River from Cairo to Kentucky, one local did not hesitate. "Certainly," she responded. "Negroes swam it by the thousands the night they burned Froggie James for the murder of Annie Pelley."[13]

Although Pelley's race and sex were paramount, her social class mattered, too. Observers consistently pointed out that Pelley was not simply a white woman (although her race confirmed her as a "respectable" worker); she was

also a "working girl," earning an "honest living" as a sales clerk at a dry goods store. That fact played a critical role in how she was memorialized.[14] In the murder's aftermath, the affluent Cairo Woman's Club established the "Pelley Noon-Day Rest Room," which offered working women employed downtown a safe and befitting place to gather and relax during their lunch hours, removed from the city's vice culture and commercial rapaciousness. With the blessing of Pelley's family, locals also planned to erect a monument in the cemetery above her grave in her hometown of Anna, paid for by public donations. A committee contracted C. S. Huddleston of the Centralia Marble and Granite Works to create the 1,200-pound tombstone.

On October 16, 1910, three thousand people gathered in Anna, filing through the city cemetery to see the statue of a weeping woman below a massive crucifix. A band played dirges as a priest gave the invocation and blessed the memorial with holy water. The graveside speakers, a handful of local political and religious leaders, used the occasion to exonerate their friends and neighbors and verify Pelley as the sole victim. The group that had slain James and Salzner was "not a mob," according to Judge A. J. Pickerell. "I will not characterize it as a mob; It was an uprising of an outraged community." This absolution of Cairo's lynchers was necessary to, in Pickerell's words, "defend the honor of the working girl, no matter what the cost."[15] White elites did not similarly idealize other categories of wage earners, as evidenced by the city's backstory of profound intraclass division by race, origin, and "skill."

The Cairo of Anna Pelley and William James was a place of working-class hopes and dreams, and of nightmares, and of impossible expectations unrealized. Once projected to be among the great metropolises of North America owing to its position at the confluence of the continent's two largest river systems, antebellum Cairo showed incredible commercial promise as the southern terminus of the Illinois Central Railroad and a wartime entrepot for the Union Army. It was also a place of immediate fear. Nervous that their community might become a port of entry for escaped slaves, Cairo's white citizens had vigorously upheld the Fugitive Slave Law and the state's Black exclusion policy. When war broke out in 1861, the city of roughly 2,200 inhabitants included only twenty-three free Blacks.

However, Cairo's population grew four-fold by the end of Reconstruction. It diversified, too. The closure of the Union Army's "contraband" camp meant that by 1870, Cairo had swelled to roughly three thousand African American residents, planting the seed for a small Black professional class that ascended politically through the Republican Party. The site that Charles Dickens had

once described as a "dismal swamp" became a hub of transshipping, flour milling, and the small-scale manufacturing of barrels, bricks, cigars, and beer.[16] The Gilded Age boom also brought railroad and banking magnates, followed by luxury hotels and posh mansions along what became known as Millionaire's Row. But Cairo's peak proved fleeting. The city and the steamboat waned together as river cargoes declined by more than two-thirds between 1890 and 1910.[17] Although its population would not top out until the second decade of the twentieth century, observers in 1909 already spoke about Cairo as a place of dwindling promise. Yet the shocks of modernization—de-skilling, dislocation, inequality, and social fragmentation—continued to be felt. The city remained, as historian Kerry Pimblott argues, "an *interstitial* region in which northern and southern cultures, political economies, and structures of racial oppression converged."[18]

That oppression consisted of a systematic vilification of Cairo's propertyless poor and Black working class, whose condition was "particularly precarious" relative to more proletarianized Black workers in other border cities.[19] With few legal protections and no institutional basis for organization or negotiation, African American wage and migrant workers, many of them formerly enslaved, nevertheless understood their interests as what one observer termed a specific "class of laborer."[20] They attempted to bargain collectively, banding together and walking off the job in the face of dangerous conditions. In fact, Cairo's "roustabouts," who loaded packet freight, had probably been the first African Americans to launch coordinated labor actions in the region.

Subject to fluctuating pay and unsteady employment, by the 1870s, Black levee workers were not only instigating work stoppages but also were blocking white strikebreakers from their job sites. The prospect of Black "competitors" accelerated intraclass conflict, and melees routinely broke out on Cairo's docks between desperate workers of various backgrounds who "underbid" one another for a day's wages. Much publicized in the local press, worker-on-worker violence fueled popular stereotypes that rivermen, and especially those of African ancestry, were predisposed to brutality, fueled by alcohol and drugs.[21] Even more critically, wharf laborers faced coordinated backlash from management, who emphasized individual contracts and denied the right of workers to negotiate as a group or obstruct company property. Citing the "spirit of mobism" among Black rousters who struck for higher compensation in the summer of 1877, the *Cairo Bulletin* complained that strikers had "no right to prevent others from working who are willing and desire to work for old wages."[22]

Owners also used Black working-class empowerment—any effort to dictate the pace or rewards of their labor—to foment racial animus between workers, or, as one newspaper put it, to "use the white rouster as a club to beat [Black rousters] into line."[23] Others recommended replacing African American levee workers with mechanical cranes, or with "imported" Blacks from the Deep South, or with Italians, or "dagos," whom they deemed more pliable and easier to retain.[24] Labor and race conflict prompted the *Cairo Bulletin* to investigate the so-called differences between the "plantation negro" and the "steamboat negro," whom observers claimed exhibited stronger bonds of workplace unity than even well-oiled labor unions.[25] Although the *Bulletin* deemed Black workers North and South to be comparably seditious, wage-earning dock workers—those outside a plantation tradition—were seemingly harder to manage and "constitutional" in their disobedience.[26]

Business leaders urged the police, who instigated periodic "roundups" during periods of labor shortage, to enforce vagrancy laws that would compel Black river workers to either return to the job or face jail sentences.[27] "There is one solution of this situation," one steamboat owner explained. "That is for the police to round up the negroes loafing in the dives and joints around the city and give them the choice of going to work . . . or being put to work on the rockpile."[28] Others avowed that the response to disruptive Blacks "taking advantage of unfair conditions" to demand unreasonable rates should be greater owner control. In effect, Black rousters, who represented "the lowest class of unskilled labor," should be "made to work."[29]

What Cairoites understood as "the labor problem on the river" reemerged in the summer and fall of 1909, and it was in this milieu of social flux, economic contraction, and the demonization of the Black underclass that a mob lynched William James.[30] The aftermath led to retrenching racial segregation and curbing African American political power, as commentators blamed the violence on the increased presence of a supposedly defiant Black proletariat. Journalist and former Cairo resident Willis Leonard Clanahan, for example, maintained that the city's border location made it a harbor for a transient working class of "bad niggers" from fellow river cities, including Memphis, St. Louis, Louisville, Cincinnati, and New Orleans. This "floating" population of Black laborers, he contended, paid few taxes and proved "a constant menace to the town."[31] According to one white local, the problem was not "the better class of colored people," who allegedly supported the lynchings, but "the low negro element" of hirelings and transients.[32]

When the *Chicago Tribune* complained that Cairo had been infiltrated by a

"criminal negro class" from the South, it was making a simultaneously raced, gendered, and classed argument that appealed to men across class lines, whites across gender lines, and elites across party lines.[33] Some local whites deviated from the "bad nigger" script by promoting a brand of reform invested in white Christian mission and paternalism. For example, George M. Babcock, Cairo's Episcopalian priest, asserted that criminals sprang from a vice economy run by "profit makers" and their "commercial privileges." Rather than retaliate, Babcock urged congregants to consider the living conditions of the city's Black plebeians, particularly their substandard housing, predatory landlords, and low wages. Babcock did not reject popular assumptions regarding the connections between Black workers and crime, but he highlighted materiality, rather than biology, as their basis.[34]

Pleas for reform, however, were muffled by a dominant narrative that painted African American workers as detestable yet indispensable, docile yet dangerous, stupid yet cunning, and lazy yet inherently suited to menial labor. They were, by all accounts, capricious on the job site and treacherous in the community, simultaneously fortifying and threatening the capitalist order. The glaring contradictions through which whites perceived Black toilers highlighted the lack of clear and consistent separation between the "rational" and "irrational" elements of the mob, between discernible material motives and bewilderingly sadistic acts of cruelty. As William James's lynching reveals, maniacal anti-Black impulses in Cairo were shaped by discrete political economies *and* mentalities related to race and borders: imaginings of regional and sectional marchlands, and river geographies as idealized racial boundaries that had for decades operated in the service of Black exclusion.

Such violence often seemed on the surface to represent little more than blind rage meant to intimidate or oust entire Black populations. Yet the genealogies of removal were rarely isolated from desires to marginalize economic competitors and control labor markets, cross-class fears of Black worker militancy, or the compulsion among owners to divide and discipline their employees. When it came to lynching, expulsion, restriction, and myriad customs of racial difference and aversion, factors "cultural" and "economic" were mutually constituting and, oftentimes, virtually indistinguishable.

Anyone who violated a wide variety of community standards was susceptible to group violence, as the following chapters demonstrate. At the same time, there were critical dissimilarities between white-on-white political or economic violence, which often contained classed dimensions; violence against strikebreakers, which was disproportionately directed against Black

and immigrant workers but almost always explicitly economically motivated, and which occasionally devolved into, rather than began as, lethal and racialized spectacle; and violence against non-whites, typically African Americans, who challenged white authority or violated the color line, which often contained economic subtexts, but foregrounded racial hatred as part of an intentional public performance.

In some cases, all of these processes converged, as they did in the run-up to Cairo's 1909 dual lynching, and in its aftermath. Indeed, Cairo's "roustabout problem" would persist for decades as white narrative creators condemned "indolent rousters" and cited Black worker autonomy as evidence of both racial and class insubordination. In the end, the public memory of Anna Pelley not only fetishized white womanhood; it also became an outlet for paternalistic elites to romanticize the concept of "reputable" and obedient underlings, contraposed with the city's Black drudgers, whose "unruly" reputation grew out of the community's racial and industrial history and its geographies of race and labor. In a letter published in the *New York Times* in the following weeks, Willis Leonard Clanahan argued that the city comprised "a buffer between North and South" and was, therefore, "the only town in the North which has a true race problem."[35]

The "race problem" that Clanahan identified surfaced most conspicuously through anti-Black panic, exacerbated by rising inequality and scarcity fears, especially during demographic flux or economic downturn. Of course, none of these developments made Cairo unique, as race-based exclusion and anti-Black violence penetrated virtually every corner of American society. To grasp the critical elements of historical distinction and difference, as well as their relation to the wider whole of resources, production, and property relations, we must scrutinize the "buffer" component of the "race problem," as both racial oppression and labor relations in the region were colored by—indeed, were inseparable from—Cairo's physical location between two former slave states and their reserve armies of a non-white precariat.

CHAPTER 7

Colluvies Vitiorum

It was a land of horse thieves, kidnappers, counterfeiters, brigands, squatters, and cave-dwelling pirates. Or so went the story. But the perception of Little Egypt as a culturally retrograde site of intrinsic disorder was more fable than fact. In reality, the region's "haggard" populace was often food insecure; its illiterate "heathens" were, in truth, too poor to construct schools and churches; and many of its "criminals" were guilty of nothing more than living on land to which they held no title.[1] Nevertheless, tales of freebooters and roving gangs (real or imagined) were refracted through an emerging capitalist standard for private property and human worth, and became central to the nineteenth-century lore of deep southern Illinois. As Indigenous lands became frontier "wilderness," then transitioned to borderlands, and eventually to bordered lands—surveyed, speculated, allotted, and "improved"—a rising class of local gentry, major landholders and merchants, some of whom had even arrived without property or prospects, marginalized the first wave of permanent backland settlers while simultaneously converting their settlement accounts into legend.[2]

At the same time, the ideal of orderly white settlement was undermined by an ongoing ground war over conflicting racial-labor-property visions, as new elites clashed even with members of their own social class. For instance, John Hart Crenshaw was a transplanted North Carolinian who came to own a saw mill, a merchant store, and roughly 11,000 acres of land. He was involved in early railroad construction and served as a director of the Bank of Illinois. From his Greek revival mansion, he commanded teams of state-sanctioned slave workers in the Gallatin salines. But even a man of incontrovertible status like Crenshaw was targeted by bands of other well-to-do night riders who

looked to keep the county free of Blacks, bonded or otherwise.[3] Down river from Crenshaw's furnaces, this swirl of violence contained more discernible class dynamics, as evidence of a widening split between "license" and "order" that erupted most infamously during the Flathead-Regulator War. Also known as the Massac County Rebellion, the conflict rocked the counties of Pope, Johnson, and what became Massac during the 1840s. Although men calling themselves "Regulators" had targeted wealthy farmers who purchased public lands inhabited by squatters, newspaper readers from New York to St. Louis gleaned their first impression of the region through often sensationalized reports of conflict between "Flatheads," who supposedly took root in the Ohio River bottoms, and "Regulators," who purported to uphold "life, liberty, and property" yet seized lands and livelihoods with impunity.[4]

Vigilantism, in myth and tradition, continued along the border through the century's middle decades and into the war era. Associated with Confederate loyalty, it included the Knights of the Golden Circle, cloaked in folkways and exaggerated by the Republican press, as well as the Ku Klux Klan and the infamous Aiken Gang. Postwar extralegalism coincided with, and in some cases grew out of, the cultural and political conditions of the commonly named Bloody Vendetta in Williamson and Jackson counties. The vendetta saw political parties take sides in personal feuds between contending families, culminating in the murder of prominent Republican George Sisney in Carbondale in August 1875, which further negatively impacted national perceptions of Little Egypt. In fact, Williamson County attorney Milo Erwin's purpose in writing the first history of the vendetta was to counter the standard narrative of southern Illinois as incurably debauched and "assist in tearing down the curtains of darkness" that shrouded the region.[5]

The nineteenth-century borderland, and southern Illinois in particular, proved a diorama for the elaborate interplay between such revanchism and social othering, underpinned by discrete economic forces. The vicious roots of settler dispossession and the murderous forging of capitalist regimes and borders sustained "formulas for violence" that were often independent of racial factors even while smoothing the way for further anti-Black terror. Such bloodshed then enabled powerful narrative creators to cast the region as one of irredeemable backwardness and impart timeless characteristics on its poor and working-class inhabitants, creating a feedback loop of distortion and deprivation, undergirded by a rising capitalist ideology signified by—at least the ever-present perception of—resource scarcity and labor competition.

Group violence in the borderland was not, in other words, originally or

exclusively directed at Black people. Paramilitaries had been common in the area for decades, as the "regulator-vigilante impulse" followed the colonizers' path westward, becoming a hallmark of early U.S. settlement in the Old Northwest. There was a class dimension to "frontier" regulation, which became a way for local elites to protect the social structure by policing "shiftless poor whites." In the eyes of landholders and business professionals, thieves, squatters, counterfeiters, and other "backwoods" social elements constituted a "contraculture" that threatened to upset community standards, often by defying property rights. According to historian Richard Maxwell Brown, whereas vigilante leaders were drawn from the upper class—a type of "frontier entrepreneur"—they were aided by the petty bourgeoisie and the "honest poor." "The middle level supplied the rank and file," Brown contends, and "outlaws and alienated lower people represented the main threat to the reconstruction of the community and were the principal targets of the vigilantes." To a considerable degree, extralegal "regulation" was a way to enforce social conventions without formal legal authority. Vigilantism was, in one sense, capitalism from the barrel of a gun whose targets were, in effect, non-capitalists.[6]

Self-appointed legal authority also correlated with political boundaries. As Brown maintains, vigilante movements "tended to be found in wilderness areas, close to state lines, or near Indian borders," which members used as shields of legal protection or, more commonly, perimeters to be monitored, patrolled, and defended.[7] In early Indiana, small bands of Regulators in Vincennes, Harrison, and Crawford counties functioned as the law along the Wabash and Ohio rivers.[8] In antebellum southern Illinois, counties and townships organized nocturnal sentinels to monitor the roads for runaway slaves, and armed groups clashed along the Illinois-Kentucky line. Some posses, including the Regulators who attempted to expel Gallatin County's Black population after the burning of slaveholder John Crenshaw's mill in the spring of 1842, were specifically committed to racial exclusion and threatened to cast Black residents southward.[9]

Most violence, however, was not racially motivated. Whereas the role of white terror in overturning Radical Reconstruction in the South is well documented, postwar paramilitaries were not relegated to the former slave states, nor were they committed solely to the intimidation of freedpeople. Indeed, by 1867, an alleged offshoot of the Ku Klux Klan had formed in Little Egypt. Though trafficking in clandestine activity, southern Illinois Klansmen did not organize to topple interracial governments, thwart Union Leagues, or make war on carpetbaggers and scalawags—they did not exist to curb economic-ra-

Figure 5. "Illinois Outlawry," *St. Louis Republican*, August 23, 1875. A southern Illinois Klansman posing for St. Louis journalist Joseph A. Dacus.

cial revolution. After all, there was no Reconstruction program in the free states nor a transition from slave to wage labor. And although Black aversion in the region was acute, most southern Illinois counties did not see transformational influxes of formerly enslaved people.

Yet the term "Klan" became commonplace into the mid-1870s as a catchall for a grab bag of class, racial, and partisan violence. Several hundred Klan-inspired paramilitaries in at least seven Little Egyptian counties—Williamson, Franklin, Jackson, Saline, Johnson, Union, and Pope—adopted the term despite being distinctive from their southern cousins.[10] Locals also used the phrase to describe the bloodshed. So did the regional and national press, as the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* and the *Chicago Tribune* covered "Klan" activity with regularity, even sending correspondents to the area. It was, therefore, common knowledge that Egypt's Klan involved secret oaths and handshakes and that members wore white caps and long white capes adorned with a skull and crossbones to frighten victims and conceal their identities as they carried out threats, whippings, home and barn burnings, and, in some cases, executions.[11] (See Figure 5.)

Whereas other forms of vigilantism, such as the White Caps in Indiana, involved community leaders surveilling and coercing "disorderly" elements of the lower class, Illinois Klan skirmishes were, in effect, a turf war between com-

peting business interests that often pitted one faction of elites against another through competing visions of (liberal vs. illiberal) capitalist development.[12] Though not a military arm of the state Democratic Party as in the South, Klan political targets were largely, but not exclusively, Republicans. Their prominent victims, as reported by the press (most victims were likely poor and anonymous), were all white.[13] It was, according to the *Chicago Tribune*, a Klan "with no color line in it."[14] But this was not quite the case. Observers during the 1870s downplayed or ignored the Klan's African American targets, and the idealized antebellum social system that Klansmen hoped to re-create had been predicated on Black exclusion, and racial banishment became one of their aims. Klansmen flogged and hanged—"mutilated," according to one account—one Black man and drove away settlements of others in Randolph County.[15] They systematically intimidated white reformers and teachers who taught in African American schools.[16] In other cases, Klansmen gave white farmers in Union County notice to either fire and deport their Black hirelings or face lynch justice.[17]

Covering the Little Egypt Klan for an exposé in the *St. Louis Republican*, journalist Joseph Dacus described southern Illinois as a place of "atrocity unparalleled." Dacus's chronicle combined sensationalism with exoticism and presented the Klan as an outgrowth of retrograde rural habits—a type of cultural isolation part and parcel of the "Western country." His culturally determined thesis described the "peculiarities" of the region as "different in origins, habits of thought, manners and customs than any other Western communities." Highlighting "low drinking places" and "intoxicating liquors" opposed by the "better elements," Dacus connected the Franklin County Klan to the prevalence of "Blind Tigers" (isolated cabins that sold illicit whiskey). Alleging a link between place-names and local behavior, he located Klan hideouts, including the aptly named "Sneak Out," within "wild" and untamed terrains. Hamlets known as "Bucktown," "New Orleans," "Boozy," and "Steal-Easy" testified to the "benighted" constitution of the region and its "primitive" people.

Although town life contained greater heterogeneity and orientation toward cities, which enabled urbanites to partake in "civilization and enlightenment," rural residents remained less "cultivated" than in other parts of the Midwest. Dacus, therefore, reduced their forms of violence to "feuds among kinsfolks," avowing that only "refining influences" such as education could "remove the wildness of the people in these backcountry districts." Finally, he imagined his subjects as beyond the bounds of normative whiteness and as melding the so-called degenerate qualities of "Asia Minor" with the more courageous

makeup of the "Anglo-Saxon race"—a combination of barbarism and guile that rendered them all the more dangerous.[18]

To Dacus's point, the region *was* intensely rural, its people overwhelmingly Baptist and Methodist in religion and disproportionately upland southern in origin. As the late war quickened the pace of social transformation, many residents grew increasingly concerned about various forms of racial, cultural, and industrial-economic "intrusion." Some of those changes concerned party politics. The area had once been a Democratic bastion, and bloodshed was partly a response to sudden two-party competition. Klan county residents also witnessed rapidly increasing numbers of foreign-born newcomers along the Illinois Central Railroad and in the Ohio River counties, especially Pulaski and Alexander, which also saw goodly increases in Black population. Except for Pope County, Little Egypt's Klan locales were detached from the Ohio River and outside the sphere of wartime contraband settlement. As such, they remained overwhelmingly white, at around 5 percent; Jackson County had the highest proportion of Black residents. Though Klan violence was largely directed at other white people, the very presence of Klansmen surely deterred Black migration. Above all, the Illinois Klan regions were poor, with relatively depressed mobility, stunted literacy rates, and few public schools.[19]

Dacus nevertheless eschewed a Grangerist or anti-monopolist understanding of Klan violence. He mocked those who attempted to locate the "occult" causes and "roots of evil" in monetary policy or unemployment, avowing that economic trends and banking systems had played virtually no role in making Little Egypt a *colluvies vitiorum*—a figurative mass of licentious immorality. Emphasizing vice and cultural deficiency, he disavowed what he termed "a financial view of the KKK." Yet Dacus did not reject bread-and-butter explanations altogether, even suggesting that the Klan's appeal to working-class whites was a partial result of the failures of the free labor system. He explained that the depression following the Panic of 1873 had "turned labor loose to starve because it can find no employment . . . have made men hopeless, reckless, desperate, [and] criminal." Commercial paralysis and the inability to find fairly compensated and dignified work had compelled men to "go abroad to take by force what they are denied the privilege of earning by labor."[20]

However, the Franklin County Klan was far from a mere assemblage of hardened criminals or poor whites, and Dacus's narrative shed some degree of light on its motives and class structure. The Klan leader was Aaron Neal, a forty-three-year-old attorney whom Dacus described as smart and highly perceptive but also possessing "a strong animal nature." Neal, the son of a

prominent minister, had a relatively privileged upbringing and married into a "respectable" family. He served in the Union Army as a cavalryman before entering the practice of law. Neal's chief lieutenant was Green Cantrell, a former officer in the 110th Illinois Infantry whose postwar business endeavors saw him achieve—and subsequently lose—an "ample fortune." Dacus acknowledged that some of Neal and Cantrell's victims were "wealthy" and "esteemed" individuals, including a judge and county commissioner who resided on a "large and valuable estate" southeast of Benton, which led the county's "prominent citizens" to organize an anti-Klan *posse comitatus*.[21]

Despite that, Dacus maintained that the Klan, including established landowners, preyed on debtors and small and newly arrived farmers. Their publicized targets, such as William Dungee, described as a "poor, hardworking man" who was both illiterate and indebted, were often petty-agrarians.[22] The material nature of at least some of the conflict—old landed against new, creditors against debtors—implies that the Klan contained those historian Patrick Wyman terms today the "American gentry," who often evaded justice owing to their social standing and influence. In other words, rather than "mean" or propertyless whites, Klan leaders appeared to be small-scale owners who resisted economic competition by sitting atop local hierarchies removed from larger cosmopolitan currents.[23]

As Dacus's muddled analysis suggests, the political economy of the Reconstruction-era southern Illinois Klan was complex. Its leaders were landholders and proprietors, but it was not a business owner's organization on par with historian Chad Pearson's characterization of the southern Klan.[24] Even so, national accounts of Egypt's Ku Klux were complicated by factors related to poverty and class. The outlying location of Illinois's Regulator-cum-Vendetta-cum-Klan violence made the region susceptible to exoticism and "othering," detached from social relations. Historian Edgar F. Raines Jr. suggests that the Klan label was sometimes rooted less in self-description or party politics than in "regional animosities" and "considerable bias" against ostensibly regressive sections of the state.[25]

According to Raines, Little Egypt was more than a regional descriptor; it was a "mark of derision" employed by "outsiders" to formulate the stereotypical Egyptian as a "Negrophobic, lazy, anti-intellectual drunkard who loved a good fight and held the law in slight regard." Although it was true, Raines admits, that southern Illinois political leaders were especially active in exploiting racial fears for political gain and that the region did contain self-styled "Klansmen," editors were also masters of embellishment.[26] The

"regional bias" in reporting that Raines identifies ran deeper than tabloid sensationalism to boost newspaper sales. It was part of a class-based project that associated vigilantism with poor and working-class culture even when faced with direct evidence to the contrary. While the *New York Herald* explained that Klan violence was predictable in a region populated by "uneducated, prejudiced frontiersmen," zealous editors also pointed out, sometimes with great surprise, that the Klan was led not by poor whites but by men of property, drawn from the professional class.[27] Some even ascertained, often with a sense of amazement, that leading Klansmen included the families of "the wealthiest capitalists in the county."[28]

ORGANIZED VIGILANTISM IN SOUTHERN INDIANA assumed a similar class complexion, as the region was marked by extralegal bloodshed that spoke to demographic change, capitalist development and competition, and partisan rivalry. This was especially true below what contemporaries referred to as the state's "southern line," which was marked by both geology—a topography of fertile, flat prairies giving way to deep valleys cut between "knob" hills and karst caverns—and presumably different ways of mediating political and social conflict.[29] Originating in Euro-American expansion, colonizer violence against Native "savages," and collective protection against non-white "marauders" and "outlaws," the region had a long history of so-called Regulators and Vigilance Committees. By the late-Reconstruction era, the extralegal imposition of community standards was expressed most infamously by the White Caps, whose precursors in Indiana dated to the late 1830s, when "night riders" partook in public shaming, expulsion, and other forms of rough justice. One early twentieth-century amateur historian speculated that Whitecapping originated as home protection by backwoodsmen during Indiana's frontier era, when public legal institutions were rare.[30] Historian Bryan D. Palmer traces White Cap genealogy back even further to the English *charivaris* and their "ritualised methods of enforcing community standards and morality." He argues that in the context of the mid-nineteenth-century Lower Midwest, such rituals exposed "the undercurrent of brutality associated with lower-class life."[31] And historian Brian Butler contends that though it might be easy to dismiss Whitecapping—agrarian, largely white-on-white, and often carried out by men of "excellent standing"—as unrelated to the urban anti-Black violence, both forms of community enforcement were rooted in the perceived defense of family and home.[32]

In any case, the White Cap violence that rose during the 1870s and peaked during the late 1880s garnered national media attention, and editors blamed the mayhem on the seemingly innate characteristics of southern Indiana: its people, their habits, and even the land itself. State officials took notice, prompting Governor Isaac P. Gray, a Democrat, to authorize an investigation through his attorney general's office. The committee's report censured the lawlessness and resulted in the passage of a state law in 1889 that increased punishments for wearing caps or masks for unlawful purposes.[33] Yet the bloodshed persisted, and contemporary reports linked the White Caps to both Civil War secret societies and the southern Ku Klux, insisting that Whitecappers were influenced by anti-Black terrorism in the postwar South. Like Klansmen, Hoosier raiders wore white (typically conical) hats extending onto the face to conceal their identities, often outfitting their horses with makeshift caparisons to intimidate and camouflage recognizable markings.[34] White Caps and Klansmen also exerted local control similarly through intimidation, whipping, flogging, expulsion, and, in some cases, murder. One Indianapolis editor described southern Indiana White Caps, who were making "a war on negroes," as loyalist Democrats who had been Knights of the Golden Circle during the war. One of their sworn duties, he alleged, was to "shoot every negro who was caught crossing the Ohio River."[35]

But race proved a critical difference between the White Caps and their southern antecedents. Though likely inspired by Klan stylings, the Whitecapping epicenters of Crawford and Harrison counties were overwhelmingly white. Historian Clifton J. Phillips maintains that there was no overt racial element to the White Caps, and they operated "chiefly in those rural counties which contained few or no Negro residents." He nevertheless acknowledges that the very presence of Whitecappers "may have acted as a deterrent to the settlement of colored people in districts infested by them."[36] It surely did. Though Black people in Salem, in Orange County, had been expelled before the war, the towns of English, Leavenworth, and Tell City likely went sundown near the turn of the century in episodes that owed to extralegal, though not necessarily White Cap, terror.[37] In other words, southern Indiana's Hill Country paramilitaries were undoubtedly committed to maintaining white racial homogeneity. However, with few Black residents and, in many cases, no actively challenged color line to persistently enforce, they were concerned above all with settling private political scores or financial vendettas and imposing predominant bourgeois values.

The class dynamics of Whitecapping were more clear-cut. White Cap victims, like the communities that produced them, were overwhelmingly white and, in all likelihood, disproportionately poor. The White Caps earmarked men and women across all age groups who had violated "social and moral conformity," targeting squatters, thieves, debtors, and others who violated the sanctity of property rights.[38] Classed infractions included "laziness," "drunkenness," "immorality," and "general cussedness," and the region's lumpenproletariat—described as "shiftless" men and "immoral women"—became particular objects of violence.[39]

Chronicler Henry Clay Duncan noted that southern Indiana's rocky hills and poor soil meant that the area had been populated by an "undesirable class" who could not be policed through public means, thus necessitating vigilantes of "reputable" citizenship to punish "crimes against property," notably the theft of hogs and other livestock. In fact, the passage of laws to curb "anonymous" violence was, in most cases, a response to tenants and plain folks violating the property rights of landowners. It is unsurprising, therefore, that White Cap membership was skewed toward businessmen and large farmers, including elected officials, with the organization's relative affluence explaining the reluctance of local law enforcement to investigate and convict White Cap crimes. Their victims, meanwhile, consisted of "the idler, the loafer, the vagabond," or, in one infamous and fatal case, the "shiftless, worthless fellow who liked his dram, disliked work, [and] was poor."[40]

Most narrative creators failed to highlight such class distinctions, as editors sensationalized the bloodshed on the border as static and apolitical violence. Yet, as political scientist Ted Robert Gurr contends, Whitecapping became a generic term for vigilantism and "was most prevalent as a spontaneous movement for the moral regulation of the poor whites and the ne'er-do-wells of the rural countryside."[41] Indeed, of the eighty White Cap cases between 1873 and 1893 investigated by historian Madeline M. Noble, the vast majority involved perceived familial neglect or inappropriate sexual behavior, concepts coded to poverty.[42] Indiana's White Cap presence thus demonstrates that, in the absence of Black populations, the same moral panics and law and order paradigms that justified violence against African Americans were readily applied to "non-respectable" whites. Though reports of White Cap violence slowed during the 1890s and ground to a halt with the conviction of a posse of night riders in Bartholomew and Monroe counties in 1912, perceived threats to free white labor endured and evolved.[43]

PROVINCIAL STEREOTYPES—CLASSED CONCEPTIONS OF "Egyptians" and "Butternuts"—persisted into the Gilded Age, exacerbating intra-worker violence and reflective of widening gaps in industrial development between regions. As urbanization, immigration, and consumerism intensified, politicians and pundits, especially in the North and East, recast rural borderlanders into stock character representations of anti-modernity, dehumanizing them similarly to African Americans, the Chinese, and "not quite white" immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. Once again, elites portrayed poor whites in the Ohio Valley as lacking either industry or moral constitution, as their charges of deserved destitution replaced those of wartime disloyalty. This understanding of poverty as pathological or attributable to individual failing signaled a new wave of progressively sophisticated "scientific" racism, legitimized by biologists, sociologists, and public figures.[44] Laziness, personal weakness, and defective culture became explanations—rationalizations, in fact—for systemic underdevelopment, hence justifying arrangements of deprivation and wealth in a society of soaring inequality.

Such social stratification spurred additional bourgeois prejudices against "inferior classes," popularized through eugenics and civilization theory. This movement involved the application of racialized or subhuman characteristics—"fit" and "unfit" peoples—to the full range of human beings with the intent of promoting or excluding particular groups, including poor people of European ancestry. Forwarding inferior genes and so-called hereditary traits as explanations for white poverty, widely read eugenicists such as Madison Grant reasoned that the "natural habits" or "heritable genes" of poor whites were, in Grant's words, "too complex to be disposed of by reference to the hookworm, illiteracy, or competition with the negroes."[45] In addition to cohabitating a region with upland southerners, the arrival of masses of impoverished immigrants led anxious middle-class commentators in the North to increasingly adopt ideas about innately defective poor white culture which were formerly espoused by the southern gentry.[46] Critics applied concepts concerning the inborn or ancestral roots of "idleness" and "lawlessness" not only to ethnically diverse urban industrial spaces but also the old "Butternut belt," as northern researchers and reformers continued to attempt to explain the social "darkness" of the borderland.

Although the expression "white trash" originated in the early nineteenth century, with planters and enslaved Blacks alike using it as a contemptuous designation for poor whites, it grew in popularity during the 1880s. The phrase's new universality coincided with the rise of eugenics and Social Dar-

winism as justifications for laissez-faire economics and racial apartheid and as explanations for widening class difference amid a "struggle between the races." Emphasizing conflict and competition, capitalists and racial theorists manipulated Darwin's subtitle, "The Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life," by applying his "survival of the fittest" syllogism to not only nations but also to class and racial subgroups, or the "unfit" rungs within the "dominant" race.[47]

Sociologists Matt Wray and Annalee Newitz argue that "white trash" was a classed and racialized concept in which a degraded form of race ("white," coded as "wealth") is used to "explain" class ("trash"). The result, by the Gilded Age, was a "white trash" imaginary that generated a set of myths and stereotypes linked to the behavior, intelligence, gender roles, and habits of poor whites while citing "deficient culture" to explain away class stratification and blame poor people for being poor, thereby skirting structural questions and absolving middle and upper-class whites.[48] As anthropologist John Hartigan Jr. notes, the expression soon became a feature of Midwestern literature and commentary. Explaining the presence of "poor white trash" in the region, novelist Sherwood Anderson recounted that uplanders had once "pushed north along the rivers and settled in Southern Indiana and Illinois" where they soon "slipped quickly back into their old slothful way of life."[49] In addition to the term's obvious class and racial inflections, it also retained partisan and micro-regional characteristics. The *Chicago Tribune*, for instance, stigmatized the "poor white trash" of the Ohio Valley as it had the "Butternuts" of southern Illinois: "a class without property . . . without ambition, living in squalor, holding a deadly animosity to the black man . . . and ashamed to work because they would be 'doing negro work.'"[50]

This renewed "white trash" discourse informed debates during the 1880s over the meaning of "Egypt." One camp, comprising largely Democrats, rejected the "heathenish darkness" thesis.[51] Instead, it held that the term's genesis was older, rooted in either geography and place names or events surrounding the harvest of 1831. Reiterating the region's fertility or affirming that it had served as a granary for the rest of the state during times of hardship, residents renounced accusations of "thick darkness and extreme ignorance."[52] The second explanation echoed the *Chicago Tribune*'s position that "Egypt" emanated from the lethargy and anti-intellectualism of the people. To many northern Illinoisans, deep southern Illinois was "not intended to typify a land of plenty . . . but rather a country the poverty of whose soil was equaled only by the dense ignorance and constitutional indolence of its people." Instead

of myths concerning milk and honey, adherents to the "dark Egypt" idea avowed that this portion of the American Bottom consisted of "buck ague, yellow dogs, possums and hoop poles: the chief occupation of the people to be chewing plug tobacco and swallowing quinine." Residents of this "modern Egypt," the editor continued, were "held in a bondage of laziness from which no Midianite Moses would ever lead them—to be groping in mental darkness, compared to which the shadows that fell upon the land of the Pharaohs was an Italian sunset."[53]

The persistence of a utopian capitalist free labor ideology, meanwhile, led some commentators to insist on the capacity of "white trash" to achieve social mobility through thrift and toil. Proponents believed that the "right to rise," as Abraham Lincoln termed it, now enshrined by Republican policies and secured in the South through federal civil rights laws, would produce a leveling effect of economic mobility through wage savings and small proprietorship or landholding. Free labor would uplift the white populations, North and South, that had been degraded or left behind by their proximity to slavery. The *Freedmen's Record*, for one, applauded the effects of Reconstruction for having stabilized class and migration systems across the sectional divide. The editors explained that, owing to slavery's destruction, "poor white trash [are] no longer repelled and forced to spread over Southern Illinois and Indiana, the darkness of Egypt."[54] Other writers, including Englishman Maurice Williams in his history of the cotton trade, echoed the idea that the South's wage labor revolution proved not only a boon to former slaves and poor whites in the former Confederacy but also to the lower extremities of the Midwest.[55]

Attempting to rationalize poverty within the so-called uncivilized populations of southern Illinois in 1878, the *New York Sun* described the "American Egyptian" not as a separate race but as nevertheless the product of breeding, identifiable through several degraded characteristics rooted in class and culture. Derived from the upland peoples of Tennessee and Kentucky, the *Sun* proposed that the subjects in question wore butternut jeans and spent most of their days "mummified" with alcohol and tobacco. The basic written forms of the ancient world, including the hieroglyphics of Egypt, were too advanced for the mule-bound hill and swamp dwellers in southern Illinois. "The American Egyptians, as a general thing, cannot write at all," the correspondent stated; they communicated through regional and local colloquialisms that are not comprehended by outsiders.[56]

Amateur histories and historically minded civic boosters, as well as private historical societies and other bourgeois preservation and heritage-oriented

institutions, recycled familiar ideas about social difference as they related to poor whites in the borderland. Early chroniclers of the region assigned animal-like characteristics to the people of Egypt-Hoosierdom, and book titles such as Edward White's 1873 work *Evansville and Its Men of Mark* betrayed their class perspectives.[57] Avocational historian Robert Wilson Patterson, for instance, echoed old free-labor arguments in his lecture on early settlement in southern Illinois, delivered before the Chicago Historical Society in October 1880. He seemingly accepted the basic premise of an outmoded downstate culture, characterized by a paucity of schools, an abundance of grazing, and the absence of straight board fences—a moral judgment against popular understandings of property that reproduced the "Republican critique of the Lower Midwest." The supposed lack of legal institutions, public works, and defined estate boundaries was more than "pre-modern"; it was also, in a sense, pre-capitalist. All the same, Patterson explained that uplanders had migrated to Illinois with admirable intentions, including to escape propertylessness and the humiliation of being demeaned as "white trash" by prominent slaveholders. In this sense, Patterson's work built on antebellum antislavery treatises that, though rife with classist assumptions, were generally sympathetic to the plight of the borderland's poor whites.[58]

Growing inequality also led elites to exploit white poverty for political gain. Each party during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era accused the other of manipulating poor and working-class whites. Republicans argued that Democrats' avowed concern for "poor white trash" was purely rhetorical and opportunistic. Yet Lincoln's heirs confirmed Democratic condemnations by writing off heavily Democratic counties as irredeemably "backward," politically unreachable due to either social inferiority, often linked to an allegedly immutable "southern" culture in "Copperhead" or "white trash districts."[59] This emphasis on cultural deficiency meshed with the popular outlook, common by the late nineteenth century, that poverty was a personal and not a social failing. Pivoting away from the republican ideals of Jeffersonian yeomanry and Lincolnian mobility, Americans may have been less concerned than ever that destitution was incongruent with a "free" citizenry because privation was increasingly seen as an inevitable—and even useful—feature of capitalist society.[60]

Meanwhile, aping the Lost Cause narrative toward Reconstruction, Democrats continued to charge Republicans with "importing" newly enfranchised African Americans and "buying" just enough indigent voters to steal elections.[61] They also perpetuated the idea that free Blacks, encouraged by white

Republicans and their supposed belief in "negro superiority," savagely mocked hardscrabble whites while threatening to commandeer their jobs (if not their wives and daughters).[62] Ultimately, the concept of "poor white trash" proved a political instrument for voters of both parties—one that stripped its subject (penniless white people) of political agency and absolved bourgeois partisans from scrutinizing the interests and culpability of their own social class.

The 1896 presidential nomination of southern Illinoisan William Jennings Bryan reanimated "dark Egypt" tropes in the press, nowhere more so than in William Cowper Brann's *Iconoclast*. Brann was born in Humboldt, in central Illinois, and had lived in the northern part of the state and across the Mississippi River in St. Louis. Though a Bryan supporter, Brann retained deep prejudices against the southern portion of his home state. He explained that phrases like "worthless as an Egyptian" were common in northern and central Illinois, whose residents had allegedly always regarded downstate people with "undisguised disdain." In an 1896 exposé comparing southern Illinois to the South, Brann maintained that the former was called "Little Egypt" not because of the fertility of the soil but "because its dense ignorance was thought to resemble the 'thick darkness' which Moses laid upon the land of Mizriam."

According to Brann, Midwesterners well understood that the prevailing pastimes "south of Centralia" involved "catching bull-heads and crawfish, frying out rattlesnake oil as an antidote for rheumatism, shaking with 'buckager,' drinking 'sackafrack ten,' 'chawin' natural leaf' and expectorating the juice at a knot hole." Much like the contradictory biases directed toward African Americans, Brann viewed southern Illinoisans as subordinate yet dangerous, benighted yet cunning, and languorous yet somehow meant to "naturally" perform menial labor. Painting poor whites as whites painted Blacks, he avowed that men in "the southern swamps of Suckerdom" were "hungry, but too lazy to work and too cowardly to steal; lousy, yet lacking sufficient intelligence to scratch." Perhaps conflating despair with stupidity, Brann also saw tobacco-stained, catfish-eating Egyptians as curiously unconcerned with politics: "too tried to drag himself to the voting booth." Overall, Brann saw Egypt's "stock" as blighted by "filth and ignorance" and the region's inhabitants—"unreconstructed . . . savages" of an "inferior race"—as altogether "impervious to the humanizing influences of civilization."[63]

Such theses were common even in scholarly works. Norman Dwight Harris, in his 1904 dissertation on slavery politics in the Land of Lincoln, later published as *The History of Negro Slavery in Illinois*, described the "poor whites" who emigrated from the South as "ignorant, shiftless, and obstinate," as well

as "often unscrupulous and dishonest."[64] Other observers noted the timelessness of these so-called intrinsic characteristics. In his 1894 study of illiteracy in southern Indiana, *Hoosier Schoolmaster*, Edward Eggleston of New York marveled at the increase in literacy over the second half of the nineteenth century. Yet he reiterated that Hoosierdom's "poor whites" had not self-improved but that many had simply moved farther west as new (and ostensibly superior) migrants flooded the region.[65] From a northeastern gaze and informed by popular eugenical currents of the Victorian era, including Social Darwinism and what sociologist Matt Wray calls "the middle-class cult of cleanliness and hygiene," Eggleston confirmed upland southern rurality as innately ignorant, violent, and socially retrograde.[66] The *Atlantic Monthly* praised Eggleston's research as illuminating "the rudeness and ugliness" of a region dominated by "poor whites from Virginia and Kentucky." The reviewer described this period in Indiana's history as "the intermediate West, after the days of pioneering, and before the days of civilization—the West of horse thieves and of mobs."[67]

Some contemporaries nevertheless recognized the overly reduced regional types of *Hoosier Schoolmaster* as markers of *class* rather than historical perspective. Writing in 1915, historian of Indiana Logan Esarey pushed back against the "cracker" characterizations of Eggleston and others, calling the idea that southern Indiana was populated entirely by "poor whites" from the South "an aged and failing myth" that has served to reinforce the region as "lawless, ignorant, sordid, debauched, and predatory." Denizens with "bare feet and patched pants" were not uncommon during the antebellum period, but they were not, according to Esarey, "the essence" of southern Indiana.[68]

Sociological conclusions about the backwardness of the borderland also penetrated popular literature. Accenting the singularity of southern Illinois, John Merritte Driver's 1911 sectional reconciliationist novel, *Americans All: A Romance of the Great War*, regarded the region's persistent poverty as a direct result of its inhabitants' cultural and racial traits. A Minnesota minister and ardent Republican, Driver contended that connections and proximity to the antebellum South, including its climate and "environment," had fossilized the cultural and physical makeup of Lower Midwestern people. Despite being "blue-eyed Anglo Saxons," the position of poor southern whites had once been below that of enslaved Blacks, as even "'the Nigger,' low-browed, grinning, fetish-worshiping, a mere chattel, was better clothed and housed and fed, and in every way better off than the despised 'po' white trash.'"

Driver alleged that even after propertyless Kentuckians, Tennesseans, and Carolinians migrated to the lower free states, they remained "slothful,

apathetic, resigned to poverty and squalor, submissive to a thousand crude and comical practices." Although they were the first settlers to arrive in the state, Driver maintained that Ohio Valley residents could never have created a thriving commercial metropolis like Chicago owing to their "caste-ideals and love of leisure" and "lack of strenuosity and economic and educational enterprise." Despite their hopes of acquiring large estates in the North, of replicating the plantation system and becoming their own masters, these uplanders were devoid of "the learning, culture, [and] industry . . . that had always characterized the Southern Lords." Rather, they remained an alternate social group "who spoke the 'Nigger' lingo, believed and practiced superstitions, and had no real passion for learning and progress." Driver concluded that southern Illinoisans' lack of superlative qualities "left *them* 'crackers' still, 'jes' po' white trash' as they were before the exodus." They were, in other words, "a servile race" that created a distinct—and especially violent—ecology in Little Egypt.[69]

The transition to capitalism in the borderland was indeed marked by far-reaching violence. However, that violence had far less to do with pathology and cultural innateness than with basic conflict over resources, attempts to extend or tame production and consumption, and the enforcement of private property relations. Moreover, the flawed notion that wage work could uplift so-called Suckers, Hoosiers, and Butternuts to become small capitalists (or, far more often, pliant workers) reinforced the pernicious fiction that such groups, when they fell short within supposedly impartial markets, constituted a "deserving poor."

The free labor credo promised material advancement to everyone with the proper work ethic and moral constitution. So, as Reconstruction waned and collapsed, and as the wage system expanded while scores of Americans remained landless and socially immobile, elites were forced to conclude that the problem of outcomes lay not with the inherent contradictions of capitalism but with individual failure. Rather than highlighting human-driven policy or political shortcomings, much less systemic, environmental, or deep historical factors, the emerging ideology viewed the poor as responsible for their condition. Even as radical farmers and wage earners insisted that industrial capitalism represented a betrayal of the original Republican vision, free labor, once a "semi-socialist" idea that pledged relative economic egalitarianism, morphed into a worldview of business elites and a searing condemnation of those who had not "made it."[70]

The "unfit" within this Social Darwinist framework—like the provincial

poor whom novelist Mary Jane Holmes termed the "white niggers," circumscribed from middle-class respectability—included not only particular persons but entire social groups and geographic regions, and those who failed to prosper had only themselves to blame.[71] Of course, communities supposedly born in "flathead" savagery and unable to shake their "dark" reputations decades after narrative creators had first printed the legend for upstate and eastern consumers continued to shift and break along both material and ethnocultural lines. The racialization of labor quickened by industrialization, proletarianization, and rising inequality during the Gilded Age further widened the legal and cultural gap between Black and white workers on the border, pitting especially subordinate segments of the working class against one another. The reverberations of this popular stigmatization of both "poor white trash" and "shiftless negroes" opened the door for violent dehumanization, with catastrophic repercussions.[72]

CHAPTER 8

The Discipline of Terror

The bloodshed began in the river towns and spread northward in the winter of 1901. That January, newspaper readers across the nation were aghast at accounts of a full-scale "anti-Negro crusade" in southern Indiana following a succession of widely publicized crimes against African Americans. Rooted in years of popular reporting on miscegenation, "negro lawlessness," and "cheap" Black labor, the rampage began when a white mob lynched three Black men in Rockport and Boonville for the alleged murder of a white barber, and it soon spread across Spencer County and beyond.[1] In typical fashion, the violence was classed as well as raced, with reports suggesting that vigilantes were targeting not only Black "brutes" and "inhuman creatures" but also the "bad class" of "negro idlers" and "roustabouts."[2] Some participants even proposed leveraging the chaos to cleanse their towns of "undesirable" white residents as well.[3]

But the enraged crowds ultimately directed their vitriol toward Black citizens, who boldly resisted to the point of diminishing returns when faced with displacement or death. In Newburgh, victims including James Crow, a Black man who had married a white woman in Kentucky before moving across the river to Newburgh, where such practices were informally prohibited, publicly stated their refusal to leave, armed themselves, and fortified their homes in anticipation of the expected onslaught.[4] Crow and others were forced out only by the overwhelming threat of arsonists and weaponed "viligence committees" comprising "prominent men of both political parties" in collusion with local police.[5] In the end, white mobs displaced untold numbers of Black residents from the affected counties, and the expulsion generated predictable backlash in neighboring communities.[6] This intraregional "victim diaspora"

led white Evansvillians to complain that the vilest class of African Americans, formerly residents of Spencer and Warrick counties, were once again being unceremoniously "dumped" into their city.[7]

State intervention was slow to the point of malfeasance. Mass support for the pogroms, which the *Rockport Democrat* deemed a "necessary evil," and bad blood between civilians and state troops owing to state intervention in coal mine strikes, led Governor James A. Mount to respond tepidly. Mount would be dead within a month, but escalating conflict prompted the Anti-Mob and Lynch Law Association, based in Springfield, Ohio, to warn that "the white citizens along the river counties are preparing to drive out the colored population from that section, especially Spencer County." African Americans in southwestern Indiana also predicted what one observer foresaw as "the Bloodiest Race wars that has ever been" as border cities began expelling Black populations.[8] "Other towns in Indiana along the river are taking steps to drive the worst elements of Negroes away," an editor reported. "In some towns no Negro is permitted to live. Vigilance committees have been appointed at Grand View, Enterprise, Tell City, and Leavenworth."[9] Mount's successor, Winfield T. Durbin, took a firmer stand, but not before white supremacist avengers carried out fatal attacks in Terre Haute in February 1901 and Sullivan County in November 1902. The former involved city police refusing the governor's offer to send troops then standing by as citizens broke into the jail, abducted Black prisoner George Ward, and hanged him from a bridge over the Wabash River before burning his body on the embankment.[10]

Like most anti-Black group violence, the outbreak in southwestern Indiana was part of a deep process of cause and contingency, as racial banishments in one place tended to impact Black residents in communities dozens or hundreds of miles away, resonating from the border toward the midwestern interior. This "Great Retreat," as James W. Loewen terms it, "redirected" the flow of African American migration away from rural areas and river towns toward isolated ghettos in the urban metropolises of the Great Lakes.[11] The domino effect occurred not only through dislocation—Black families forced from one locale to another—but also through the collective behavior of white mobs across political boundaries. To that point, historians Leon Litwack, Eugene H. Berwanger, and V. Jacque Voegeli allege that, in Voegeli's words, "Except for the South, the Middle West . . . was the region most firmly committed to white supremacy."[12] Similarly, in his work on lynching beyond Dixie, historian Michael James Pfeifer argues that the "southern tiers" of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois were "especially prone to communal violence" that sought to

avenge both sexual offenses and "transgressions against property." The Lower Midwest, which Pfeifer describes as "a cultural and political borderland of the South that shared some of its racial and antistatist views," would witness "an analogous, although smaller scale, reaction against the racial equality espoused by the expanding Reconstruction state."[13]

In truth, the violence that Voegeli and Pfeifer identify in the "middle border" arose and operated paradigmatically in different places and was inseparable from the structural realities—both the physical geography and the daily push and pull—of production, resources, and markets. As such, split markets arising from different antebellum labor systems and the legal and cultural attributes that they manifested or exacerbated—border panic, racial exclusion, and regional stereotyping related to demography and economic underdevelopment—shaped the specifications and regional peculiarities of group and especially anti-Black violence. As racial exclusion evolved from formal policy toward a cross-class mass culture enacted through terror, new social frameworks arose to facilitate attempted racial homogeneity through segregation, banishment, and restriction, often spearheaded by regional elites: businessmen, editors, banks, real estate developers, and policymakers.

Elucidating this thesis involves scrutinizing both specifics and systems. For example, much of the region's anti-Black violence was not economically motivated in any direct sense. Lynching, in particular, was a sadistic and spectacle-based display of flagrant racial hatred and human carnage. Yet the ideological rationale and capacity for such violence had deep roots in the region's racial and property regimes, with their emphases on Native depopulation, scarcity consciousness, and political borders as sites of "invasion" and material threat. The borderland's history of aversion reinforced the notion of Black people—escaped slaves, freedpeople, and mobile laborers—as economic rivals and potential strikebreakers who would take their jobs, "amalgamize" their communities, or otherwise upset the social equilibrium. Put simply, anti-Black violence took on distinctive forms in certain regions according to historically specific social transformations, including in areas most immediately affected by Black migration and where popular anxieties concerning labor competition could, therefore, be maximally exploited.[14] The legal and cultural construction of white space in the borderland—its violent extraction from Indigenous people and steadfast defense against non-white incomers—was linked inextricably to notions of free white labor.

Group violence was a capricious phenomenon. Although collective attacks on African Americans were technically extrajudicial, their reinforce-

ment through discriminatory laws and ordinances, combined with the state's consistent failure to prosecute, meant that lynching and expulsion were, in effect, forms of state policy.[15] Conditioned and justified through vocabularies of economic threat, such violence sometimes functioned as a patent form of capitalist discipline.[16] Yet, it was often removed from overt questions of work and wages. Violence was typically pedagogical, carried out in public to enforce standards of community behavior through terror.[17] But other times it was not explicitly instructive, with audience and pageantry playing little role; in such cases, bodies were not intended to be found. Likewise, anti-Black violence was frequently justified through processes of dehumanization, or the concept of the "Negro as beast," with whites casting African American targets as "brutes," "devils," or "fiends."[18] For all that, perpetrators often reveled in the mortality and even humanity of their victims by emphasizing their human qualities or prolonging their suffering.[19]

Group violence was in some sense archaic, rooted in centuries-old notions of "mob justice." Yet there was also a correlation between lynching and modernization.[20] Exclusion dovetailed with both economic competition and contraction in cities, where anti-Black sentiment slowly and unevenly replaced, rather than reinforced, xenophobia against certain immigrant groups.[21] At the same time, it was rigidly enforced in "economic backwaters"—rural and small town communities isolated from markets and industry where localism overrode differences of class, gender, and occupation to unite what Pfeifer terms a "cross-section of the rural population."[22] Poor and working-class whites drew most of the blame for anti-Black violence, even though mobs included and were often led by "good men" of the "better classes." In that sense, violence could be expressly economic, with lawbreakers seeking to eliminate or intimidate perceived competitors; other times, as with the William James lynching in Cairo, bloodshed was rooted in the defense of white womanhood or community, outwardly detached from a material base.

As in the South, the community consensus that empowered terror meant that social superiors who did not actively participate in the attacks tended to either condone or express sympathy with the mob. Elites who did denounce the violence often attempted to turn a fundamentally *social* problem into an *individual* one by singling out particular parties or citing psychological derangement as the cause. Affluent observers also deflected blame from themselves and their own social class by condemning "lower whites," even when, as was typical, anti-Black violence was led or provoked by the petty bourgeoisie. Although anti-Black mobs typically represented a cross-section

of white society, well-off whites also used "race riots"—episodes of "disorder" of their own creation—to regulate the working class altogether.[23]

Even then, such violence did not ensure deference. Black victims often fought back, even in circumstances where their resources and rights were severely restricted and in which defense or retaliation carried the potential for even wider recriminations. In addition to establishing press outlets and civil rights organizations, African Americans engaged in armed self-defense, including through picket lines, jail marches, and rescues, as works by historians Sundiata Cha-Jua and Brent M. S. Campney recount. The latter concludes that "lynch mobs were more common but less successful than scholars have previously assumed," owing in large part to organic resistance.[24]

Less well documented is how Black laborers, such as those in Evansville in the summer of 1903, attempted to find a scintilla of short-term opportunity in the aftermath of horrific tragedy by leveraging their labor power following racial removal and exodus to press for work and wages. In short, lynching and racial expulsion failed in their basic aims of labor control in part because Black workers exhibited agency, less through dramatic feats of extraordinary heroism than by daily efforts to survive by bargaining within the workplace. Such defiance notwithstanding, anti-Black group violence proved the consummate expression of *anti*-class consciousness, doing more than any other trend or institution to undermine the often precarious and fleeting capacity for worker cooperation across the color line.

Those "lines" were manifold, irregular, and indigenous to the communities that enforced them—known largely through word of mouth and, for some, nightmarish personal experience. These non-political boundaries and borders, forged by custom rather than law, illustrated the interrelation between race, space, and property. Southern Illinois's "dead line," north of which Black people were barred from settling, either by writ or ritual, ran from the Mississippi River in Alexander County west through Pulaski and Massac to the Ohio River in Pope County. This imaginary perimeter demarked a separate social reality, self-containing the river towns that had seen high migration rates of African American "contrabands" during the war, creating a racial border on top of a regional one, and islandizing Little Egypt's four southernmost counties.[25] Black townships, communities, and hamlets on the margins, either known by their white nicknames ("Niggertown," "Little Africa") or not (South America, in Saline County, Illinois), were in effect rural Black ghettoes, typically isolated from commerce, and often exploited by whites as vice districts or sources of cheap and especially exploitable labor.[26]

The most distinguishing features of anti-Black group violence in the region, however, concerned the political economy of borders—both racial and labor—and their influence on policy, demography, and culture. Unlike the Deep South, where lynching tended to function as a mechanism for social control over African American populations in the context of historical interracial cohabitation, violence in the borderland was often intended to either discourage or drive off Black populations altogether. In his analysis of lynching in Arkansas, historian Guy Lancaster argues that "increased social distance between Black and white . . . decreased the potential for cross-racial solidarity."[27] The same held true north of the Ohio River. Although "social distance" in the political sphere was narrower in the Midwest because African Americans possessed affirmative rights that enabled them to vote and serve on juries, more pronounced forms of separation in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois created an even wider gap between the races. Owing to that history of Black exclusion, as well as physical proximity to the South, where 93 percent of African Americans still lived in 1900, anti-Black lynching was decidedly more common in the borderland than it was in other parts of the North.[28]

Expanding what Fitzhugh Brundage terms the "geography of lynching" to include the Lower Midwest, historian Jack S. Blocker Jr. estimates that there were more than thirty cases of mob lynching and race riots in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois between 1885 and 1910. He finds that although lynching was less frequent north of the Ohio River when adjusted for population, Lower Midwestern Blacks were proportionally more likely to be lynched than Blacks in many southern states. Between 1900 and 1910, for example, lynching rates in Indiana, where Blacks comprised roughly 2 percent of the population, were over four times those of Virginia and nearly equal to those of Georgia.[29] Put another way, the borderland combined the longstanding racial aversion practices of the Old Northwest with the South's patterns and rates of white-on-Black group violence.

AFRICAN AMERICAN MOVEMENT ACCENTUATED FEARS of "white slavery" and economic "replacement," leading to scores of "race wars" across the borderland between the end of Reconstruction and the First World War. States that had for decades legally excluded Black migration now saw significant increases in their African American populations. Illinois's Black populace expanded from 57,028 to 328,972 between 1890 and 1930, an increase of

nearly 500 percent.[30] Migration into Indiana was slower, but southernmost cities, including Jeffersonville, Princeton, and Mt. Vernon, saw significant increases. By 1900, Evansville, the state's second-largest metropolis, was 12 percent Black.[31] And whereas white workers largely viewed demographic change through the prisms of race mixing and job competition, many owners saw opportunity. Rather than adhering to a consistent "open" or "closed" border policy, capitalists responded to population shifts by supporting any form of migration—flows or stops—that would maximize labor surplus, increase profits, and weaken worker clout. In addition to conforming to their personal racial prejudice, racial exclusion might benefit businessmen by curbing particular civic resources or stabilizing the labor market. Other times, capitalists pushed for targeted racial integration to flood the market as production dictated.[32]

The prevailing language of racial restriction and violence spoke to the power of owners, not workers, to not only legislate border policy but also to craft anti-Black, and thus anti-worker, narratives. Politicians and demagogic editors warned against Black competition and miscegenation while deploying a "race war" discourse to describe everything from minor altercations to large-scale anti-Black mobs or "anti-Negro crusades." Attempts at school integration led to supposed "race wars" in East Carondelet and Alton, Illinois.[33] In 1889, townspeople in Lawrenceville, Illinois, declared a "race war" when two Blacks were killed attempting to break their companion out of the city jail in the aftermath of a brawl arrest.[34] Following a "race war" in Carlisle, north of Vincennes, whites dynamited a Black church and threatened to drive every Black resident from the county.[35] In Newburgh, Indiana, editors reported a "race war" in 1901 when local whites attempted to lynch a Black newcomer for the crime of having a white wife.[36] They adopted the term again the following year when whites in Eldorado, Illinois, attempted to snuff out an African American industrial institute by attacking Black homes and threatened to eliminate "the presence of the colored race." Though the governor called in the state militia, virtually all of the town's Black population fled, and the school, modeled after the Tuskegee Institute, soon closed. When asked about the source of their racial animus, Eldorado's townspeople acknowledged a pervading fear that "colored labor will be used in the mines which are opening in the vicinity."[37]

Although some contemporaries defined "race war" as any "wanton attack by white men upon negroes who do not come into direct industrial competition with them," thus distinguishing it from labor conflicts that were often

viewed as legitimate violence, editors regularly employed the phrase to evoke a range of worker-on-worker bloodshed.[38] Newspapers reported a "race war" in Marion, Illinois, when white workers threatened to kill Black newcomers in the winter of 1889. The fracas began when the F. M. Westbrook & Sons tobacco company cited the skill superiority of southern Blacks experienced in stemming and stripping tobacco leaves to hire a force of African American laborers rather than local whites. White workmen soon posted notices throughout town warning Blacks to leave within ten days or face corporal punishment. When warnings failed, they threatened to attack Black neighborhoods and destroy the mechanisms of production by burning the Westbrook factory. The tension peaked when a crowd of citizens surrounded and fired on the home of a Black manager, Logan Collins, who retaliated by shooting back into the crowd, causing it to disperse.[39] Cries of "race war" went out again in Huron, Indiana, in 1900 when the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company imported "negro laborers of the most disreputable class" to raise and repair a roadbed.

Rather than opposition to economic competition among workers, pushback came largely from middle-class whites who resented the vice element of Black laborers ostensibly "taking the town" each night, spending their wages on gambling, alcohol, and prostitution. After a mob scattered the rowdy toilers, rumors swirled that the railmen were set to retaliate and burn the town, prompting whites to break into armed posses and patrol the county for Black workmen as law enforcement refused to intervene. These scenes were typical, as the function of "race war" was to exonerate white actors, or at least give the impression of shared culpability, as part of a prevailing narrative regarding the protection of virtue and law-abiding community.[40] Elites would also use the obfuscatory "race war" to exonerate owners by obscuring the material dimensions of collective violence, with the press applying it to describe labor bloodshed in Virden, Pana, and Carterville, Illinois, even in instances when anti-strikebreaker crowds included Black employees.

Residential segregation exacerbated the ecological distinctiveness of African American poverty, lending legitimacy to anti-Black violence. Formerly enslaved people packed into shoddy and overpriced dwellings in precarious environments: near flood zones, within heavily polluted industrial areas, and on riverside bottoms below the town. Multi-family and multi-generational housing was common in neighborhoods such as New Albany's "Contraband Quarters," with numerous families often living in one shanty.[41] In larger cities, segregation through custom and coercion gave way to formal exclusionary covenants, as "Anti-Negro clubs" restricted non-white residents. The imposi-

tion of "dead lines," spatial boundaries beyond which African American renters and homeowners were not allowed to penetrate, was intended to protect real estate values in emerging suburban neighborhoods, prefiguring the more comprehensive redlining of ensuing decades.[42]

Housing exploitation, reinforced by civic zoning laws, changed in form but not function and Black residents consistently paid more than whites for inferior living and commercial space. By the early twentieth century, white real estate boards in Cincinnati and elsewhere prohibited their members from selling property to Blacks in established white neighborhoods or business sections.[43] All the while, wildly skewed arrest and incarceration rates worsened Black destitution. In Evansville, for example, Blacks were three times more likely to be arrested than whites, largely for petty crimes, including vagrancy, drunkenness, and small theft.[44] The starkness of African American poverty reinforced racist stereotypes that associated Blackness with laziness and uncleanliness, the same traits that marked the region's "white trash."

Public school segregation also underwrote a new, more localized color line. In the best scenarios, Black schools proved models of white paternalism. In Carbondale, for instance, where Blacks soon made up one-fifth of the population, white reformers established the Attucks School in 1866, comprising Black children taught by mostly white educators (the board was also entirely white).[45] Oftentimes, such as in Alton, Illinois, whites resisted school integration violently, and school burnings became commonplace.[46] Indiana mandated "separate but equal" education in 1869, and many small towns, where small Black populations did not justify the creation of separate schools, simply banned African American students.

Larger cities, including Evansville and New Albany, where sizable Black populations could be partitioned but not practically expelled, established segregated schools. These options—inclusion, separation, or banishment—required people to contemplate and ultimately determine a definition of "colored," or who was and was not "white." In a testament to the malleability of race, some white communities based decisions of inclusion on superficial physiognomic characteristics; others pieced together the ancestry of students to determine the percentage of "Negro blood." In New Albany, for example, children of one sixty-fourth African descent were denied admission to white schools as citizens debated the parameters of whiteness.[47] Where African American populations were so entrenched as not to be removed, or were integral to the local economy, white officials often constructed school funding as part of a broader detachment from municipal status and services. Officials in

Clarksville, Indiana, across the Ohio River from Louisville, simply disannexed the overwhelmingly Black portion of its city in 1905, leading one disapproving editor to admit that legal removal was "better than whitecapping them."[48]

White communities also found consensus in massive resistance to school integration. As an Ohio paper warned of Black migrants: "Let them in to our social circle, our neighborhood, our schools and grow up with our children and see if you don't wipe out all distinction on account of color."[49] When the state legislature repealed racial segregation in schools during the 1880s, outraged whites protested that their children would be "contaminated" and at risk of "becoming colored." Some southwestern Ohio towns, including Ripley, reportedly barred Black students from white classrooms in defiance of state law. Others, such as Yellow Springs, waited out the backlash by temporarily shuttering their public schools.[50] In Butler County, where white residents outnumbered Blacks nearly forty to one, a group of four hundred white men from both political parties, headed by a "leading banker" from Oxford, organized to preserve school apartheid. One civic leader recommended the city's color line be expanded to "[not] allow a nigger in the town."[51]

Black parents fought back against white terror campaigns despite overwhelming odds. Small numbers attended anti-integration meetings, where they were met with threats and dehumanizing slurs. When white residents in New Richmond, Ohio, responded to state integration mandates by "persuading" local Blacks to maintain the separate school model, African American father James Ringold challenged city leadership by insistently—and legally—sending his children into an all-white classroom and suing the superintendent and thirteen "prominent citizens" for damages, prompting the school board to close the school entirely.[52] Although whites defied school integration across partisan and class lines, Republican newspapers located the problem among Ohio's "p'or white trash," and Democrats were quick to highlight their opponents' classism.[53] Reporting on fears of "negro rule" in Ohio, E. L. Godkin's *New York Post* compared the racism of southern Bourbons to Republican elitism, with Democratic allusions to "ignorant Blacks" consistently countered by Republican complaints about "ignorant whites."[54]

At the same time, even Republican lawmakers feared that liberal laws in labor, housing, and education would convey their border communities as "havens" for freedpeople fleeing the early Jim Crow South.[55] Meanwhile, locals often took matters into their own hands. Border skirmishes against Black workers were common, propelled by economic downturns and exacerbated by partisan editors and party debates over Reconstruction policy.[56]

In other cases, counties attempted to banish freedpeople wholesale, owing to what sociologist Elliot M. Rudwick terms a "colonization conspiracy" that Republican elites were systematically populating the region with Blacks to both obtain cheaper labor and buttress their political coalitions.[57] Popular recoil against these supposed intrigues intensified with the Exodus of 1879–1880, as several thousand Blacks from North Carolina entered the state.[58] Led by party officers and elected officials, notably the county treasurer, Democratic leaders in Shelbyville, Indiana, used "hoodlums" to drive Black voters away from the polls.[59] Working-class expulsionists feared that their social entitlements, meager as they may have often been, were endangered by any influx of additional workers and by the presence of Black laborers above all.

Political and media outlets stirred such fears. Stripping Black migrants of agency, the Democratic press blamed the sudden increase on "Republican kidnappers" who hoped to lure in loyal voters by promising them better wages and housing.[60] In the meantime, Republican papers outside the region censured "Bourbon negrophobia" in southern Indiana for fostering the anti-Black sentiment, which, according to the *Chicago Tribune*, contained ignorant, superstitious, and prejudiced "poor whites . . . who came there originally from Kentucky, where they were lower down in social status even than the negroes." Citing the 1864 banishment of Black people from Washington County, the editor maintained that southern Indiana's "hatred of the negro rivals the worst counties in Alabama and Mississippi" and violence against Blacks "disgusts even [white] Southerners."[61]

Democrats also argued that Republican support for Black migration was driven far less by altruism than by opportunism. Insisting that "Africanizing the state" had nothing to do with a labor shortage in the region, they cited instead the desire of Republican leadership to use Black workers to simultaneously undercut white organizable labor *and* bolster party ranks with loyal electors—to forge a "Solid North" through Black votes that might counter the so-called Solid South. Consistent with the Jim Crow South's criminalization of the Black working class through mass convict leasing, Democrats avowed that white workers would then become the "idlers and criminals" that "pauper labor" had created in Dixie, as the overriding fear among non-elite whites was that Black migration was "degrading white labor and making his livelihood more precarious."[62]

Some Republicans alleged that certain immigrant groups, not African Americans, were the true underminers of free labor. They reserved their loudest cries to oppose far-off Chinese "coolie" workers, whose supposedly "des-

titute of moral principle" rendered them "incapable of patriotism . . . utterly unfit for American citizenship."[63] The *Chicago Tribune* reported that, like antebellum slavery, the "Chinese problem" was destined to expand, depress white wages, drive out white workingmen, and destroy "the dignity of white labor." In creating a mass of "poor white trash," this new form of "servility" would lead white employers to "look upon white men working for hire as debased to the social level as the negro working without pay and under the lash."[64] In direct defiance of the Anglo-Saxon worker's "right to rise," white competition with Chinese labor re-created "all the vices of slavery . . . without the paternal relation between master and slave."[65]

Yet most borderland whites continued to see African Americans as the far more immediate threat, and the ranks of parallel authorities, including white paramilitaries, swelled in response to surges in Black movement.[66] As in Shelbyville, white people in Hancock County, Indiana, had seen a few Black families migrating from the South in late 1879. But when residents caught wind that a second exodus was making its way from North Carolina, the "old line class" determined to thwart any future asylum seekers and banish Black settlement altogether. Encouraged by William Mitchell, editor of the *Hancock Democrat*, residents guarded the rail station and posted notices throughout the city warning citizens against harboring or employing Black people. When a "Ku Klux"-like band clandestinely burned the house of a white man who had aided the migrants, the *Chicago Tribune* declared that the "Yazoo Plan is being established in Indiana soil" and reminded residents that they were "not south of Mason and Dixon's line." As part of this "Mississippi code," the leaders of the anti-exodus movement warned that African Americans would incite violence, especially against white women. But the primary fear among white citizens was that a sudden inpouring of former slaves would "impoverish" the community and "bring pauperism into our midst." One resident explained that while he harbored no "ill will" toward Black people, he saw them as contributing to the existing oversupply of workers and did not wish to "substitute white labor for black labor."[67]

In reality, as economist Leah Platt Bouston shows, Black migrants from the South were more likely to occupy new jobs or replace existing Black workers, not white laborers. African Americans in the borderland understood this. Fearful that any additional workers would reduce their wages and tighten already restricted residential space, Black wage earners were often unwelcoming to new arrivals, as in-migration widened inequality within Black communities. Put differently, it was not simply the case that some newcomers suc-

ceeded and others failed, or so went the perception; rather, for many African Americans, who expressed an intra-racial replacement anxiety comparable to that of white workers, it was that some newcomers gained at the expense of already established residents.[68]

THE "OTHERING" OF THE BORDERLAND exposed social realities—underdevelopment, poverty, and precarity—that enhanced the likelihood of racial exclusion and worker-on-worker violence, especially during slacking labor markets and economic downturns. Such currents were by no means unique to the region. The national trend of craft unions designating "skilled" labor served to exclude non-white workers and, by the turn of the century, Black toilers had largely been "ruled out of respectable trades in the North," a theme Frederick Douglass had observed as far back as 1880. In Indiana and other parts of the Midwest, the number of Blacks employed in "skilled" industrial pursuits was in net decline, leading the Indiana Afro-American Conference of 1899 to conclude that "the greatest enemy of the Negro is the trade unionism of the North."[69]

From the owners' perspective, profit maximization often involved seeking out the cheapest workers available regardless of race. Yet individual prejudices and local racial standards—including history and customs—impeded this ideal of "colorblind" exploitation. Many employers accepted and benefited from the segmentation of workers by race, gender, and ethnicity; some refused to contract non-whites simply because they feared backlash from the broader community. It was not uncommon, for instance, for white workers to "hate strike" in response to the enlistment of Black employees.[70] The dilemma was not merely the inferior racial composition of the new labor but also that, from the perspective of white workingmen, the first non-white hire signaled a wider undercutting of wages and opportunities.

Meanwhile, elite condemnations of region-inflected working-class racism typically circled back to the protection of the bottom line. Prefiguring modern-day "right to work" arguments, anti-labor observers argued that the detested "strikebreaker" was an honest laborer who had been unfairly demonized by benighted workers. For most proprietors, the cardinal sin of anti-Black violence lay not in their white supremacy, which was often vital to labor management, but in workers defying managerial control. Whereas Black labor in the South was essential and therefore ensured by the strict discipline of owners, in the North, white workers had the power—and the demo-

graphic position—to attempt to squeeze African Americans out of the labor force. From the vantage of the ruling class, anti-Black working-class racism was not the overriding problem (indeed, it was necessary for the maintenance of industrial relations); the more critical matter was the capacity of workers to cut into profits by halting the gears of production.

In any case, racialized labor violence became an impetus for the wholesale removal of non-white populations, creating a pattern in which local whites responded to owners using Black workers as strikebreakers by expelling all African Americans from given communities.[71] When Black migrants established a small settlement near Wheatland in southwestern Indiana, night riders posted notices across the area promising harm to "any man who employs negro labor" and vowing to burn the homes of any white family that "harbors, leases or rents lands to any negro."[72] Anti-Black group violence also rocked Hillsboro, Illinois, in the summer of 1907 when a white city contractor hired Black workers from St. Louis to pave the town streets. Hillsboro's native white wage earners apparently threatened the "imported" men, prompting most to quit and return across the river. The continued presence of Black workers "aggravated the race feeling" and for two months, white citizens warned of retaliation. Finally, in August, they used an alleged assault by a Black paver on "wealthy citizen" John T. Maddux to attack and expel the city's African American laborers. According to one newspaperman, white toilers were now "drawing the color line" in southern Illinois.[73]

Communities often revealed their sundown status by systematically deporting not only Black residents but also day laborers. Hill Harris, an African American plasterer from Connersville, Indiana, northwest of Cincinnati, was accustomed to procuring contracts in nearby towns. But when in the fall of 1884 he took a job in Brookville, just eighteen miles away, a white mob forced him out of the city limits, exclaiming that they "didn't want any more nigger workmen."[74] Such episodes were commonplace in the decades following Reconstruction. Local whites drove Black workers out of parts of Knox County, Indiana, in 1902 and Norris City, Illinois, in 1912.[75] When a southern Illinois construction firm based in Carmi brought twelve African American workers to nearby Herrin in the summer of 1912, reportedly "the first negro laborers ever imported into the city," they were immediately deported by local American Federation of Labor affiliates.[76] Failure to heed such demands often produced fatal consequences, including through racist terrorism revolved around public spectacle.

There was no definitive "lynching era" in the borderland. Rather, between the antebellum era and the first third of the twentieth century, the region

experienced a continuum of anti-Black violence, with slowdowns and upticks predicated on a variety of local factors. For example, at least two lynchings occurred in the small town of West Union, Ohio, during the second half of the nineteenth century. The first, in November 1856, saw a white mob storm the jail, seize Black inmate William Terry, and take him a few miles away to Manchester Island in the Ohio River, which was under Kentucky jurisdiction. There, the group hanged Terry from a sycamore tree on the shore. The second occurred in January 1894 after Black sixteen-year-old Roscoe Parker was accused of killing an elderly white couple. Despite the efforts of the local sheriff, a mob stormed the same jail that had housed William Terry and proceeded to capture and beat Parker. Hoping to extract a confession, they repeatedly hanged the child from a tree before placing a grain sack over his head and riddling his lifeless body with bullets. In the aftermath, curious spectators collected souvenirs from the site and stripped the lynching tree of its bark and branches. Medical students purportedly exhumed his body that night, and legend held that Parker's cranium remained in the possession of a local doctor. Though decades apart, spectators at the time did not separate Parker's lynching from that of "Old Bill Terry"; newspaper accounts and county histories connected the two in writing and memory as part of a desire for, on the one hand, a sense of immediate collective justice, and the need to uphold established boundaries—racial, material, political—on the other.[77]

THE YEAR 1903 SAW A particularly explosive wave of anti-Black violence in the Lower Midwest. White mobs carried out lynchings in Indianapolis and Belleville. In Shawneetown, an attempted execution provoked an exodus of African American residents out of Gallatin County, and Black newspapers such as the *Colored American* identified the hypocrisy of "hangings and burnings" in the Land of Lincoln.[78] However, two events that summer, one in southwestern Indiana and another in Danville, Illinois, on the state line, fed white southern predictions of a reverse migration back across the Ohio River and into the South, where owners and civil authorities could effectively manage the Black population. Perhaps the largest civil disturbance in Indiana history occurred that July in Evansville, the seeds of which were planted decades earlier, rooted in a soil of class, ethnic, and racial hostility. As historian Brian Butler explains, Evansville's "riot" should be understood as "the culmination of processes within which conflicting concepts of order and the exploitation of race anxiety became integrated and worked to reinforce each other between the 1850s and 1903."[79]

Identifying "order" with the ruling race, native-born Evansvillians had long viewed the non-Anglo laboring class, including Catholic and anti-temperance German and Irish immigrants, as threatening collective morality. As these immigrant groups gradually "became white" by accommodating themselves to native politics and culture, including the adoption of white supremacy, popular discrimination against the "disorderly" underclass shifted sharply toward a growing population of African Americans. Stigmatized Black newcomers worked overwhelmingly in "unskilled" positions, and whites characterized them as equal parts licentious and shiftless, drunken and spendthrift, childlike and savage. Once attributed primarily to the city's Germans, such traits were antithetical to respectable whiteness; they were also anathema to the key capitalist virtues of frugality, sobriety, industriousness, and mobility.[80]

The perception that Black "invaders" represented not only a risk to "public order," as Butler argues, but also to white wages was decades in the making and woven deeply into the city's political culture. Frank M. Gilbert's popular history, published in 1910, described Evansville's young Black male population—"lazy, idle, expert thieves, and natural born liars" from the "forests of Africa"—as the "greatest evil" confronting the community, with Germans now a targeted, rather than targeting, group.[81] Both political parties and all of the city's major newspapers, including its German-language daily, the *Evansville Demokrat*, perpetuated concern over a "disordered subculture" of poor African Americans that clashed with Victorian mores and intensified during periods of economic slump, elevating two-party competition, especially during the municipal elections of 1899 and 1901. By century's turn, dehumanizing anti-Black stereotypes, rooted in political economy yet outwardly disconnected from workplace matters, ruptured into occasional group violence led by or involving large numbers of aspirational Germans, who had achieved the legal and social advantages associated with white identity but whose "on the make" statuses remained touch-and-go.[82]

By and large, "unskilled" Black laborers did not immediately imperil the jobs or social standing of "skilled" German workers who were overrepresented in the July 1903 mob and who lived several miles across town. However, given the context of anti-Blackness replacing anti-Germanism and bourgeois moral panic concealing class conflict, it is perhaps unsurprising that a plurality of the rioters hailed from Evansville's largely immigrant and working-class Fifth Ward or that the violence itself was reportedly instigated by a German-American trade unionist.[83]

All the same, generations of compounding race, class, and ethnic animus

came to a head on Friday, July 3, 1903, when African American John Tinsley killed white police officer Louis Massey in the Black neighborhood of Baptisttown. Unable to lynch Tinsley, whom police had moved to Vincennes, several thousand white citizens surrounded the jail the following Monday. After being repelled by a local militia, the mob looted hardware stores to obtain firearms for "a war on the negroes." Some newspaper accounts painted Blacks as instigators, rousing the ire of locals by marching armed through the streets shouting "down with the whites."[84]

Groups of African Americans, including women, armed themselves and fought back. A committee of Black clergymen and business owners lobbied City Hall for protection. But the resulting "race war," whose leaders on Monday night purportedly included local painter and noted trade unionist Edward Schiffman, destroyed dozens of Black homes and businesses, compelling Governor Durbin to mobilize the National Guard, which the mob jeered as "nigger lovers." Twelve people, including Schiffman, whose head was "blown off" by rifle fire, were ultimately killed and dozens wounded in gunfire exchanges between Guardsmen and riotous whites.[85] Perhaps one-quarter of the city's Black inhabitants of roughly eight thousand fled in the aftermath, southward to Henderson, Kentucky, and northward to Vincennes and Terre Haute. The city's African American population never recovered from its peak of 12.7 percent in 1900.[86] A plurality of the displaced Blacks from southwestern Indiana, as well as those who had been ousted from Belleville, Illinois, during a mass expulsion in June, made their way to Danville, Illinois, where locals used Black refugees from Evansville as a pretext for instigating a lynching the subsequent week. Located near the Wabash River 170 miles north of Evansville, Danville's white residents feared the unwanted newcomers would remake the nearly all-white community into a "nigger paradise."[87]

Back in Evansville, city leaders shifted responsibility to both the city's "lower" classes and unwanted "outsiders," including the immigrant poor and gate-crashing Kentuckians. Absolving fellow elites, they instead blamed a sometimes vague yet ostensibly pervasive vice culture of alcohol, prostitution, and corruption associated with radical immigrant and working-class politics, prefiguring the Red Scare of the following decade. Led by Terre Haute native Eugene V. Debs, socialism was on the rise in Evansville in 1903, with candidates polling upward in recent elections. Schiffman and a second rioter, Richard Groesbeck, were reportedly party devotees, leading the Evansville Business Men's Association to slander local labor officials and prompting Governor Durbin to suspect that socialists had instigated the riot. Denounc-

ing the "red flag of anarchy" and equating anti-Black violence to labor conflict, he proclaimed that there would be "no race wars, no class wars" in Indiana.[88]

Speaking in Evansville days later, Debs charged Republicans with fomenting racial animus among workers and maintained that "not a single socialist was connected with the Evansville outrage." He reiterated, "The socialists are the only ones who recognize not merely the political and economic equality of the negro, but his social equality as well."[89] Though Schiffman, who was exonerated by the coroner, was seemingly a committed unionist and socialist, it is also possible that civic leaders played up his workerist bona fides to both discredit Debs's party and shift blame for the riot toward the German workers. Observers across the region echoed this anti-labor posture, as editors effectively divided fault between Black and white workingmen.

In thrashing rhetoric, newspaper editors directed their ire downward. The *Vincennes Sun* blamed the bloodshed on the presence of "bad niggers"; other outlets, including the *Dayton Press*, indicted Evansville's "white trash" element.[90] The riot also provided fodder for the Jim Crow press. The *Atlanta Constitution*, for one, noted that while Midwesterners were quick to highlight lynching as a peculiarly southern phenomenon, they systematically downplayed homegrown anti-Black violence and failed to examine their own "lower class" of "negro-hating white trash."[91] Evansville business leaders, state politicians, southern segregationists, and regional editors largely agreed on one thing: rioters were workers, and the working class alone, both Black and white, had been liable.

In contrast, reactions among toilers exposed the depth of intraclass division. Some white workers viewed the Black exodus outcome as a victory for free white labor and honored their fallen comrades as martyrs, with the press predicting that agitators might use Schiffman's funeral to stage some type of demonstration. The Workingmen of the Painters' and Decorators' Union, to which Schiffman belonged, ultimately held a procession with a brass band leading a march of workingmen to the cemetery.[92] The city's Black working class, meanwhile, responded to the violence through exodus as well as workplace action. Many withdrew their labor out of fear of reprisal; others used Black flight to leverage their labor power, utilizing the tightening market to pressure their employers. For instance, the Evansville Business Men's Association complained that the "race war" had led African American steamboat rousters (white men who performed similarly unspecified and "unskilled" labor were given the more dignified term of "deckhand") to either call for raises or abandon packet trade labor altogether. With rouster hirelings

increasingly scarce, the Black workers who remained insisted on higher pay. Even then, in the weeks following the violence, steamboat owners proclaimed with great alarm that "no inducement" could be made to meet labor demands on the waterfront.[93]

EVANSVILLE WAS NO OUTLIER. THE migration of southern Blacks into predominantly white communities and labor markets in the North accelerated during the first decades of the twentieth century. Driven out of Dixie by both Jim Crow and federally subsidized mechanization in agriculture, as well as pulled northward by the promise of higher wages, the presence of poor, mobile, and institutionally unconnected workers in the borderland spurred a rise in anti-Black violence. This transformation of African Americans from an overwhelmingly agrarian peasantry into an urban industrial proletariat was coupled with a steady stream of immigrant labor from semi-capitalized parts of southern and eastern Europe. Minority strikebreaking and the collective anxieties, myths, and race-making associated with it escalated in turn. Moreover, worker replacement fears often evolved into *extra*-economic panic over miscegenation as anti-Black pogroms erupted in East St. Louis in 1917 and Chicago in 1919 as part of what became known as the "Red Summer" of white supremacist terrorism.

What culminated in Springfield, East St. Louis, and Chicago was, in some sense, part of a process of coercion and dislocation that radiated northward from the Ohio River, tied deeply to social and economic transformations in the decades after the Rebellion. For example, the 1904 and 1906 "race riots" in Springfield, Ohio, an emerging mid-sized industrial city, owed to decades of simmering racial tension around labor conflict. The local Knights of Labor had organized a bitter strike at William N. Whitely's reaper factory in 1886, which management broke through the use of Black strikebreakers. Some white workingmen never forgot, and editors would summon the long popular memory of "negro scabs" to both explain and justify anti-Black bloodshed in the spring of 1904 when a mob of more than a thousand whites lynched Richard Dixon, a Black Kentuckian who had fatally shot a white police officer.

A purportedly individual crime then became a cause for collective punishment, as the multitudes then destroyed the African American "Levee" neighborhood and its saloons, setting fire to seven buildings that housed 150 Black residents. A barroom fight spurred the creation of another white mob two years later, resulting in attacks on Blacks who had relocated to a white

working-class neighborhood known as the "Jungles" following the first riot. Although the direct involvement of community elites is conjectural, city leaders generally approved of the mob's targets, which included not only Black/white "interzones" and vice districts such as the Levee but also African American businesses and symbols of Black property and slow-building economic prosperity.[94]

Violence erupted downriver, too. In April 1903, much of the white population of Santa Fe, Illinois, a village adjacent to the Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad and directly across from Missouri, detonated in a murderous rampage. Their target was a seventeen-year-old African American whose name was not reported at the time and has surely been lost to history. He was marked for death because he allegedly assaulted the daughter of Branson Davis, a local farmer. Police, who had arrested the adolescent, soon turned their prisoner over to the mob, which by now numbered in the hundreds, and the armed horde proceeded to beat their captive until a confession allegedly passed his lips. The rioters then tied his body to an oak tree and riddled it with hundreds of rounds of bullets, tearing and shredding the child's corpse to pieces.

Their bloodlust unsatisfied, the mob turned on a work detail of African Americans who were employed in bridge construction on the nearby Mississippi. Having seen the throng coming, the Black workers attempted to protect themselves with small arms fire, to no avail. After pouring a heavy fusillade into the work camp, the mob burned their tents, stole their belongings, and, at last, content with their destruction, scattered back across the river bottoms, small farms, and cypress swamps of Alexander County.[95] Writing on the outbreak of race riots north of the Ohio River, Louisville editor Henry Watterson sneered that "the nigger has fallen on hard times" in what was once the land of abolitionism.[96]

This theme of southern elites exploiting violence on the border to justify their own system of race and labor management found particular resonance following the Springfield Race Riot of August 1908, in which a white mob of roughly five thousand expelled nearly three-quarters of the city's African American population. The Panic of 1907 and months of labor unrest in the rail and mining industries set the table for the onslaught, which began after the two Black men were accused of attempted rape and murder. The aftermath shared many characteristics with anti-Black riots in the borderland. Poor and wage-earning whites were ultimately arrested and convicted in disproportionate numbers, but the perpetrators were an interclass mix of white

workers and "prosperous businessmen in automobiles," supported by farmers and miners from neighboring communities. Although there was no perceived imminent threat from a proximate sectional or state border, nearby towns posted signs warning escaping Blacks to stay beyond city or county limits or risk being killed. Many whites also alluded to specific economic grievances, including competition in particular industries. However, as elsewhere, the brutality was meted out in the streets (not on job sites) by attacks on African American businesses, churches, and family homes. As in Evansville, most better-off whites, including politicians, editors, and religious leaders, excused or tacitly approved of the violence, blaming alcohol and vice culture rather than longstanding white-on-Black hostility.[97]

Observers agreed that the conflict had sprung primarily from longstanding and extreme racial animus across the full spectrum of the white community, even though the origins and complexion of that animus sometimes differed according to class, trade, ethnicity, and location within the city. In his seminal account, "The Race War in the North," socialist reformer and NAACP co-founder William English Walling blamed white residents as a whole for either joining or condoning the mob. "Why, the niggers came to think they were as good as we are!" was the most common justification among white rioters. In his final analysis, Walling concluded that the mayhem was rooted in "the fanatical, blind and almost insane hatred of the negro."[98]

Still, Walling and others recognized the bloodshed's material currents. Springfield was ringed by coal mining communities, where owners had repeatedly stymied union drives by importing non-union workers, often African American, and threatened to replace unionists with "cheap labor," frequently coded as non-white. In an impassioned passage, Walling recognized the calamitous precedent that would be set if white people, and especially white workers, stood to profit from, or were perceived as benefiting from, the expulsion of Black people:

> If the new Political League succeeds in permanently driving every negro from office; if the white laborers get the negro laborers' job; if masters of negro servants are able to keep them under the discipline of terror as I saw them doing in Springfield; if white shopkeepers and saloon keepers get their colored rivals' trade; if the farmers of neighboring towns establish permanently their right to drive poor people out of their community, instead of offering them reasonable alms; if white miners can force their negro fellow-workers out and get their positions by closing the mines, then

> every community indulging in an outburst of race hatred will be assured of a great and certain financial reward, and all the lies, ignorance and brutality on which race hatred is based will spread over the land.[99]

In addition to being one of the largest and most destructive instances of anti-Black violence in U.S. history, Springfield was distinctive in how the memory of the Civil War and Abraham Lincoln cast a shadow over the violence that had occurred "within the pale of influence of the tomb" of the martyred president.[100] Newspapers noted the cruel paradox of "ashen faced ex-slaves, fleeing from the city whose proudest boast is that it was the home of the Great Emancipator."[101] Wartime political and racial divisions were summoned by both white rioters, who blamed emancipation for the city's unwanted Black element, and anti-rioters, who drew on Lincoln's mythos to urge tolerance and conciliation. More than four decades after the end of the Rebellion, and in a testament to the tenacity of wartime partisanship and anti-Black reaction, members of the mob reportedly yelled, "Lincoln freed you, we'll show you where you belong."[102] Noting that the bloodshed had occurred in "an important and historical Northern town," Walling affirmed that Illinois must revive "the spirit of the abolitionists, of Lincoln and of [Elijah] Lovejoy."[103] Anti-lynching activist Ida B. Wells stated simply that Illinois had been "disgraced."[104]

Mayhem in the "Land of Lincoln" shocked the nation and catalyzed social reform, including the creation of the NAACP. Outsiders sensed the riots as a blow to northern exceptionalism and the collective memory of the Union Cause that challenged the myth of the meritocratic Midwest. While northern newspapers blamed Illinois's "white trash" elements, southern Democrats delighted in so-called sanctimonious Illinoisans driving Black people from their premises. Critics from Waco to Raleigh had long used White Cap attacks in Indiana, racial pogroms in Iowa, and African American banishment in Illinois to expose the borderland's propensity to "bar," "deport," and "banish" Black men.[105] Now, in a case of "the race problem being rapidly transferred to the North," crocodile-teared editors found it ironic that "the bitterest race war in years" occurred "among the great Lincoln monuments . . . erected largely with money subscribed by negroes."[106]

With no emancipation myth and no pretense of equality between the races, New South boosters shamelessly emphasized their unique capacity to uphold a clear division between Black and white workers. Watterson's *Louisville Courier-Journal* avowed that although southern whites lynched the occasional "bad nigger," and even conducted "causeless lynching" from time

to time, "race hatred" based on the mere presence of Black people did not exist in Dixie. This aversive phenomenon was driven by "white men who will not tolerate negro competition in industrial fields." In contrast, the supposed effectiveness of the South's Black-white relations was, Watterson suggested, predicated on a clear understanding that African Americans were essential if patently subordinate laborers who were not in competition with white workers.[107] Put simply, an unambiguous racial pecking order was necessary for class control.

White southerners found other opportunity in the violence, wondering whether Illinoisans would finally admit that Reconstruction had been a catastrophic error as the nation embraced sectional reconciliation.[108] By 1900, white veterans, politicians, and businessmen had established a national culture of North-South détente—one that further legitimized anti-Black violence by providing the cultural scaffolding for Jim Crow. That movement of Civil War enemies reunited had begun along slavery's border, expressed politically through Liberal Republican and New South politics, and typified by early Blue-Gray reunions that involved white Midwesterners absorbing and manufacturing Lost Cause culture. Evansville, which had hosted two of the first (self-styled) "national" Blue-Gray encampments in 1887 and 1899, ran popular premieres of the films *The Nigger* and *The Birth of a Nation* in 1915, correspondent with tightening racial control.[109]

Such was also the case in the spring of 1906 when Cairo's Opera House ran a new play, *The Ku Klux Klan*. Although the production promised to offer "a vivid picture of Southern life," in reality—and in a precursor to later and more popular works by Thomas Dixon and Margaret Mitchell—it romanticized the Old South, cheered the restoration of ex-Confederate political control, and glorified the white paramilitaries who carried it out. Rather than an unfinished rights revolution or a necessary milestone in U.S. Constitutionalism, such renderings painted Reconstruction as a tragic mistake led by greedy and opportunistic Republicans manipulating poor whites and pawn-like freedpeople. Perhaps inadvertently, *The Ku Klux Klan* also exposed the elitist nature of white "redemption," Klan leadership, and the Lost Cause itself. The writers suggested that, in addition to unruly Blacks, "there were two classes of white men who were responsible for the condition which existed in the South during Reconstruction": dishonest and corrupt Yankee "carpetbaggers," on the one hand, and "scalawags" or "poor white trash" on the other.[110] In other words, from the vantage of affluent southerners, threats to the racial-economic order had originated both beyond and within the region from outside

provocateurs as well as impoverished whites. The ultimate ruling-class nightmare was, by the rulers' own admission, a rough alliance between Black and white plebeians.

Racial terror continued to undermine the prospects of any such an alliance. Industrial jobs in Indiana, for example, were arguably more segregated in 1900 than in the 1870s and '80s.[111] The sudden disintegration of the Knights of Labor, followed by the rise of exclusive craft unions within the American Federation of Labor, curbed the hopes of multiracial industrial unionism. The decline of southern Fusionism (typically between Republicans and racially inclusive third parties) and the Populist Party implosion after 1896 proved deathly blows to a loosely connected wave of farmer-labor factions that had ebbed and flowed since Reconstruction. Though overwhelmingly white in personnel and preference, those movements had nevertheless appealed directly to African American producers. Their collapse, spurred by mass insurrections like that in Wilmington, North Carolina, dampened the overall prospects for a broad interracial class-based movement. Indeed, anti-Black violence *was* anti-worker violence. As historian Robin D. G. Kelley argues concerning the 1922 Tulsa Massacre, "The overwhelming majority of riot victims were working-class Black people, not business owners or homeowners, but domestic workers, tenant farmers, and wage-earning renters. In fact, disproportionate emphasis on Black capitalists as victims has served to both obscure material divisions within Black communities and advance common fictions about class mobility."[112]

The economic advancement of *some* African Americans and the particular role of Black workers as strikebreakers became the impetus for a wholesale massacre in East St. Louis in one of the most destructive cases of labor-related violence in U.S. history. Known as the "Pittsburgh of the West," East St. Louis became a hub of rail and heavy industry after the War of the Rebellion. It also had a well-earned reputation for labor radicalism dating back to the Great Railroad Strike and its instrumental role in the St. Louis Commune. However, labor surpluses and job insecurity periodically inflamed intraclass racial and ethnic prejudices. The city's African American population tripled between 1900 and 1910, then rose again from six thousand in 1910 to more than ten thousand by May 1917, prompting Democrats and some laborers to formulate a "colonization conspiracy" thesis that Republicans and industrialists were invested in the systematic replacement of white workers.[113] That spring saw mounting tensions between unorganized and "unskilled" white and Black workers erupt into a racial pogrom after owners replaced mostly

white strikers from the Aluminum Ore Company with Black strikebreakers, resulting in dozens of deaths and the displacement of more than six thousand people.

White unionists and Black race leaders condemned the carnage, but they advanced competing and largely irreconcilable accounts. For their part, American Federation of Labor officials denied responsibility. They reminded members that the East St. Louis Central Labor Council, which included African American constituents, had urged a state investigation, which deduced that Black strikebreakers had been misled by company labor agents who promised high wages and decent living quarters. Speaking directly to the Negro Equal Rights League, Victor Olander of the Illinois Federation of Labor underscored the AFL's Black membership, convention delegates, and locals.[114] The report of John H. Walker, president of the Illinois Federation of Labor, meanwhile, alleged that Black workers were "inhuman mercenaries"—"poor, innocent unfortunates" whom owners had duped into migrating to the city for the purpose of both swelling the labor pool and fomenting racial division among the masses.[115] Black unionists A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen agreed that the fundamental problem was economic rather than racial, proposing that "Negroes would do the same thing if they were in the white laborers' place."[116]

The response of AFL president Samuel Gompers embodied the contradictions of free white labor and the practical constraints of Jim Crow unionism. Although he maintained that East St. Louis capitalists had deliberately exploited racial divisions to frustrate unionization, his diatribes—which argued that the cause of the conflict was "the importation of cheap negro labor to compete with white labor"—perpetuated those very divisions. After all, southern Illinois industrialists had crushed the types of organizing drives among "unskilled" wage-earners that would have alleviated racialized labor competition. Now, Gompers charged them with buying cotton plantations in the South, then letting them lay fallow to create a pool of "cheap negro" workers to employ in their mines and factories. He then alleged that the real criminals were those "responsible for the wholesale importation of the negro for the nefarious purpose of replacing white labor."[117] In other words, the conflict between workers and owners was not merely economic, union versus nonunion, but also tribal, predicated on racial replacement.

Astute observers recognized the massacre as rooted in both bread and prejudice. Eugene Debs called it "a foul blot on the American labor movement"—one that would not have happened "had labor unions freely opened

their door to the Negro instead of barring him . . . and, in alliance with the capitalist class, conspiring to make a pariah of him, and forcing him in spite of himself to become a scab."[118] Writing in *The Crisis*, W. E. B. Du Bois blamed union leaders for either tolerating or promoting cultures of racial exclusion and white preference. Claiming that the pogrom had been "engineered by Gompers and his trade unions," the magazine spoke to the role of race and borders in noting the exceptionalism of white hatred not of strikebreakers or even Black people per se, but of "Southern Negro strikebreakers," whom industrial workers increasingly associated with failed unionization efforts.

Du Bois alleged that contempt for African American workers was so intense and deviated so widely from common ethnic prejudice against Italians, Czechs, or Lithuanians that it led whites to justify wholesale attacks on the entire Black community, replete with unfathomable acts of mutilation. He ultimately concluded that, like previous anti-Black cleansings in Evansville, Springfield, and Cairo, the massacre on the banks of the Mississippi was a sadistic melding of "business and pleasure."[119] Curbing such violence, therefore, necessarily required disassociating it from the "business" element or making anti-Blackness unpleasurable by detaching it from the perceived material imperatives of the white majority. Effectively stemming the bloodshed had to involve framing antiracism, or at least racial inclusion, as a matter of self-interest. Indeed, it was already apparent to class-conscious race radicals, including Hubert Harrison, Cyril V. Briggs, and A. Philip Randolph, that any hope for breaking the free white labor consensus in the borderland and beyond lay in interracial labor organization.[120] Just such a movement—flawed yet pathbreaking—was already well underway.

PART V

The Vanguard

As the sun set on the nineteenth century, Eugene V. Debs traveled to Evansville to speak on "the great whirlpool of competition" that had come to define the Industrial Age. Inclement weather failed to deter an eager group of coal miners and Central Labor Union members who, yearning to see Indiana's oracle of the working class, gathered at the CLU Hall and then marched as comrades toward the aptly named People's Theater. Led by United Mine Workers of America organizer Fred Dilcher, the men claimed their reserved seats as Debs took the stage and, in an address entitled "Labor and Liberty," reached out to the city's "enslaved" diggers. Imagining a worker-owned "cooperative commonwealth" to replace the brutal system of toil and scarcity that stoked worker-on-worker resentment, Debs accentuated one word above all—*competition*—and the sense of urgency around the constant threat of "cheap" and "imported" labor. Born and raised in nearby Terre Haute, he was no doubt familiar with how Evansville's proximity to the South amplified working-class fears of "replacement," as well as the frequency with which elites used the idea of a racialized border as an instrument of class control. Now, with a cadre of union miners cheering in approval, Debs insisted that capitalism had divided the nation not into separate races, trades, religions, ethnicities, language groups, or even sections but into two social classes: masters and slaves. Waging struggle along that line—not North vs. South or Black vs. white, but worker vs. owner—would determine the fate of the nation and, perhaps, the world.[1]

Returning to Evansville in the spring of 1900, this time as the presidential candidate of the newly formed Social Democratic Party, Debs asserted that the critical question in American labor was "no longer one of white or

black workmen, but one of cheapness—to control the market." The problem was, in fact, "wage slavery"—and only the concept of bondage appropriately described the "intimidation" workers felt at the hands of their overlords.[2] Sermonizing beneath a hulking poster of Abraham Lincoln, Debs refused to indulge popular "prejudices" that pitted workingmen against one another rather than collectives against the whole economic system. He argued that "modern slavery" was qualitatively different from chattel bondage, but Debs also maintained that chattel slaves possessed the advantage of never being homeless or without food and employment. Although Debs's "worse than chattel slavery" insinuations echoed the arguments of Old South proslavery apologists, his conceptualization of a shared "slavery" that transcended spaces and identities was essential to a rising consciousness of class.[3] Its emphasis on common condition, moreover, flattened differences between workers and neutralized intra-class competition, which Debs believed only benefited capitalists. Most importantly, and perhaps most strategically, he avowed that wage slavery was "continental" in its sweep, cutting across not only ethnicities, genders, races, and sectional borders but also worksites: uniting those in the railyard, the factory, the farm, and the mine. The notion of a "slavery of wages" was, in other words, a solidaristic device with multiracial implications.[4]

The Hoosier firebrand preached socialism in Evansville again that November, at Germania Hall. The city was in the midst of a mill workers' strike, backed by the CLU, the American Federation of Labor, and, increasingly, groups of militant coal miners who now dominated the local labor movement.[5] Debs described their circumstance as one in which each person with no capital was forced to exchange their labor to a "master." The only way to obtain employment was to sell the owner a larger share of one's production (to take less money). Worrying openly about how infusions of new workers might generate wage decline and displacement, he argued that the nature of the capitalist system brought toilers into tug-of-war with one another, thus magnifying non-class distinctions and hindering unity. Denouncing nationalism and imperialism, neither of which, he assured his audience, would alter their basic material position, Debs finally deemed the state of present-day wage earners to be "worse than slavery."[6] His analysis contained no mention of the specific types of oppression facing women, immigrant, or Black workers (his views on which were still evolving). Yet Debs's appeal to working-class universalism and his oblique denunciation of the industrial color line on slavery's former border, three years before a lethal "race riot" would rock the city, constituted a pointed break with the tradition of race-first enticements to white workers.[7]

As Debs's plea suggests, western Indiana was an epicenter of the early miner union activity—and resistance to it. As part of the United Mine Workers of America, District 11 had negotiated its first state agreement with the Indiana Bituminous Coal Association in early 1892. Evansville, which boasted fifty mines within a thirty-mile radius and where diggers undertook an eight-hour workday campaign under the direction of the CLU, hosted the district annual meeting that spring.[8] By 1895, Philip H. Penna of Clay County was the union's national president. Anti-union forces soon countered as owners in Columbus, Marion, and Shelbyville formed employers' protective associations and so-called Citizens Alliances to promote "open shops."[9] In Evansville, capitalists organized through the Business Men's Association and the Manufacturers' Association. As in the case of industrialist and notorious union buster Albert C. Rosencranz, civic and religious titles, Union veteran leadership positions, and family philanthropy, especially related to "industrial training" for African Americans and poor whites, often obscured aggressive and illegal anti-labor activity.[10] In 1898, Indianapolis became the site of the UMW's main offices. That same year, union miners in the four-state competitive field of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and western Pennsylvania won wage increases and an eight-hour workday. This outcome was part of a shift toward what historian David Brody terms "market unionism," which emphasized labor-management cooperation and was part and parcel of the rise of a more conservative faction of union leadership that ultimately signaled a departure from the UMW race radicalism of the early 1890s.[11]

Even so, the language of racial comity that coal miners helped pioneer remained salient, and Debs was only the latest and most vocal in a long line of labor republicans to summon the simple comprehensiveness of "wage slavery." Antebellum workers had employed the phrase, even as antislavery reformers, most of whom defined "free labor" as a voluntaristic contract, tended to ignore wage oppression or insist that workers were not, in fact, "true slaves." Yet the tension between republican (non-dependency) and abolitionist (consensual) understandings of "free labor" was, to some degree, resolved by the Civil War and chattel slavery's destruction.

As political scientist Alex Gourevich illustrates, during the 1880s, the Knights of Labor further popularized "wage slavery" as part of a broad "language of freedom" centered on "the right not to have a master at all."[12] The Socialist Labor Party, too, employed "wage slavery" in the service of what historian Lorenzo Costaguta terms "interracial internationalism."[13] Although its adherents often pointed out that the slavery of wages was not identical

to chattel bondage, the concept was a sincere valuation of the *un*freedom of wage exploitation, pitiful workplace conditions, and brutal managerial tactics. The historian C. L. R. James would later note that most of the techniques of human organization employed on factory workers during the Industrial Revolution first developed on slave plantations.[14] Most important, and as unionists from Terence Powderly to Frederick Douglass understood, by turning oppression from a racial to a material axis, "wage slavery" also had the potential to locate capitalists, rather than fellow toilers, as a primary negative reference group, thus uniting citizens along the largest common denominator: their class condition. This class-first discourse represented, by and large, a noble attempt to turn the prevailing class-race configuration away from one in which autonomy was an entitlement of white men and toward one in which non-domination was the right of every worker.

"Wage slavery" was, in promise if not effect, an extraordinary mechanism for inclusion—one necessary to building a permanent coalition among a vast and heterogeneous worker population while contending with limited resources and the utter hostility of financially and politically supreme owners. By the 1890s, as Debs's rhetoric attested, wage slavery had found expression in a new and powerful working-class vehicle that rapidly gained membership across the borderland, the United Mine Workers. Even as Black workers were increasingly subject to exclusion from craft unions within the American Federation of Labor, interracial organizing took off in the UMW, which wrote non-discrimination into its bylaws, recruited Black compatriots, featured Black organizers and propagandists, and celebrated the "brotherhood" of all workers. Militant coal miners, Black and white, constructed incorporating policies and practices unprecedented in both scale and character and justified through class-based discourses such as "wage slavery." Moreover, UMW officials recognized the practical significance of organizing the deepest parts of the Midwest, which were especially vulnerable to "cheap" replacement labor and scarcity consciousness, as interracial unionism proved momentous in the borderland owing to its deep-seated traditions of racial exclusion.[15]

As unionization progressed, miner identities grew increasingly fluid and transactional, as unionists—Black and white, men and women—debated the balance between the UMW's official stance of race "neutralism" and political realities that demanded some measure of race-specific policy.[16] Black organizers, including Richard L. Davis, W. E. Clark, and Willing Hands, promoted, by degrees, a type of racial justice social unionism, nodding toward

human rights struggles beyond the workplace that involved a more expansive working class. Yet Black unionists were—and had to be—pragmatists. They recognized that the UMW's non-discrimination culture was rooted in both sincere beliefs regarding fairness and equality and naked self-interest, as the idea that African American workers would function as comrades or competitors impelled white unionists toward inclusionary stances. In either case, the effect was similar: a relatively diverse lot of union miners were attempting to surmount not only the coordinated power of owners but also nearly a century of legal and de facto racial exclusion and inequality, as well as vicious anti-Black propaganda in politics, church, and everyday life. Interracial unionization in coal mining represented a remarkable countervailing force against the region's free white labor consensus.

At the same time, this project challenged and reinforced longstanding border fears and was in constant danger of being undermined by internal factionalism and, more critically, ruling class resistance. If stymying Jim Crow unionism in the anti-Black heart of the Midwest constituted a tall order, undermining the broader racial-class system proved beyond the capacity of one organization in one industry, as the UMW's "colorblind" ideal, though striking in its radicalism, proved both insufficient and difficult to sustain.[17] White unionists often transmogrified the "slavery of wages" concept not to find common cause or protest "all forms" of slavery but to suggest that white workers should not be reduced to the condition of Black people.[18] Indeed, the prospect of a class-based community of interests was undermined by two "wage slave" corollaries: "worse than slavery" rhetoric, a type of oppression rivalry that imagined wage work as more exploitative than chattel bondage, and the anti-solidaristic "white slavery," which invoked the supposed unnaturalness of white subjugation.

This racial qualification of one's labor status, reinforced by "negro strikebreaker" phantasm, posed a direct threat to the union's non-discrimination policy and heightened the potential for white-on-Black bloodshed.[19] The union's rightward drift, moreover, marginalized Black activists who challenged that policy by insisting that non-white workers faced extra-material coercions. By 1900, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio mines boasted the highest union density in the nation, but equivocating UMW officials had failed to expand the fight against white supremacy beyond their institutional confines, even slowing the union's once aggressive assault against race prejudice in the ranks.[20] In this sense, the story of the early UMW in the borderland reveals both the practical limits of liberal nondiscrimination and the spectac-

ular power of working-class organization to transcend cultural, political, and racial boundaries.

CHAPTER 9

Constructing a Specter

Mining in what would become the borderland was, from the outset, an interracial yet racially unequal endeavor. Philippe François Renault, businessman and courtier of King Louis XV, first brought several hundred enslaved Africans from Saint Domingue into Illinois Country in the pursuit of profits through "metallurgy" in 1719.[1] The venture flopped. However, the French soon realized—and expressed through place-names such as la Charbonierre—that what the region lacked in precious metals it possessed in a carbonized rock that would eventually transform the modern world.[2] A century after Renault, William Boone and his Black "assistant," known to history as Peter, first gathered the easily accessible deposits at low tide on the banks of the Big Muddy River in Jackson County. From there, the men waited for the silt-bottomed waterway to become navigable before floating their "black diamonds" to the Mississippi River on a small barge, then south to New Orleans. Others followed their lead, first on the Big Muddy, then throughout the state after 1823. National newspapers promoted the "great Illinois Coal Field," and the piecemeal digs of early miner-entrepreneurs gave way to more stratified work sites as small-time operators employed teams of wage workers. Using pack animals, larger boats, cars, and horizontal shafts, they carved deeper and deeper into the earth, forging the industry's original hierarchies of race and class.[3]

Early mining did not engender labor organization. Dirty and subterranean, its seasonal nature impeded worker federation, frequent overproduction led to periods of downtime, and unemployment and isolation bred gross exploitation.[4] Recalling his experiences in Ohio during the 1870s, UMW pres-

ident John McBride explained that initial miners were "scattered in remote districts—frequently many miles away from the towns—and shut off almost entirely from almost all social intercourse."[5] That began to change, however, as regional booms evolved into permanent industries with widening environmental and social effects. Initially concentrated around Alton, Rock Island, Peoria, and Springfield, production in Illinois reached one million tons in 1864 and spread rapidly alongside locomotive and steel development in exchange centers and shipping hubs like Chicago and St. Louis. According to David Brody, new bonds of fellowship below ground were "cemented aboveground by the close-knit community life of the isolated mining camps."[6] Camps grew into towns with conspicuous names like Coalton and Glen Carbon. Although those immense fields of mineral wealth would not peak until the first decades of the twentieth century, railroad expansion moved the center of gravity southward, toward the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, and nearer the old "invasion" route of undesirable migrants.[7]

In fits and starts, miners began to coalesce. They did so first in the short-lived American Miners' Association (1861), the Workingmen's Benevolent Association (1868), and the Miners' National Association (1873), then later through local assemblies of the Knights of Labor and the National Federation of Miners and Mine Laborers (1885). Whereas unionists tended to draw on cross-class support in small and mid-sized industrializing cities, bonds between workers and members of the non-industrial class, combined with racial homogeneity, often blurred the lines between class and racial comradeship.[8] Even the interracial Knights of Labor (whose assemblies were often segregated) proved insufficient in combating—and sometimes in fact reinforced—the concept of Black workers as northerly roving economic rivals. Although small numbers of African Americans moved into United Mine Worker precursors throughout the 1880s, labor newspapers persistently warned of Black toilers "taking the place of the white miner." As historian Rudi Batzell reminds, while "the shadow of slavery" hung over the entire U.S. labor movement, confining it "within narrow, exclusive, boundaries during its formative years," white borderlanders in particular continued to regard formerly enslaved wage earners as, in W. E. B. Du Bois's words, "a competitor and a prospective under-bidder." "The white worker did not want the Negro in his unions," Du Bois maintained, "did not believe in him as a man, dodged the question, and when he appeared at conventions, asked him to organize separately; that is, outside the real labor movement."[9]

Strike actions followed, and in no industry was racial segmentation more

consistently and forcefully employed by managers. The initial large-scale importations of southern Blacks across picket lines occurred in the Hocking Valley in 1874, which National Miners' Association secretary John James remembered as significant because, for the first time, owners deployed "the introduction of the negro race as an instrument with which to subjugate the white."[10] Rather than neutral witnesses to widening racial conflict, operators and other elites fanned the flames of race-based intraworker division by raising funds for the expressed purpose of "colonizing the Negroes" to drown out strikers.[11] Owners then recruited strikebreakers from Memphis, Louisville, and Richmond, promising to "flood the whole area with blacks" before submitting to union demands. They housed the strikebreakers in a military-style camp, complete with armed guards and "picket lines" patrolled by Black workers, who were warned of "armed and drunken Irishmen." When management finally put down the stoppage, the *Hocking Sentinel* declared "a gang of brutal Africans" responsible for the defeat.[12]

Labor editors debated whether Black people's supposedly innate subservience rendered them "natural" strikebreakers or if they could be conditioned toward union loyalty, often assuming that African Americans lacked either the political agency or mental readiness to understand the consequences of their willingness to intervene in labor actions. Linking these ideas to sectional borders, the *Workingman's Advocate* insisted that the supervisor's strategy was not simply to recognize the negotiating power of freedpeople but to turn a seemingly endless supply of Black workers from the South into "a reserve for capital to crush white labor," thus upending the racial pecking order by "mak[ing] the negro the *white man's master*." According to the *Advocate*, the future of labor was not merely "wage slavery" but "*white* slavery," a form of persecution both economic and racial. Whether capitalists could successfully implement that strategy was another matter. Some speculated as to the instrinsic "character" of the Black race, warning African Americans that their consent to be "used as an instrument to reduce white workingmen to the standard of pauper wages" would result eventually in their own jobs being undercut by an even more inferior racial group, the "Mongolians."[13] Framing the conflict as one of "white vs. colored labor," the *Advocate* warned readers that mine owners across the Midwest were "employing colored laborers to crush their white employees into submission." In particular, the coal fields of Indiana and Illinois had become "notorious . . . as the rendezvous for colored men who move from place to place—wherever a difficulty occurs—always ready to accept terms no matter how humiliating."[14]

When another strike wave broke out in southeastern Ohio in early 1884, the specter of Black strikebreaking reached fever pitch, as owners imported a mix of eastern and southern European immigrants, primarily Italians, and African Americans from the South, who lived and worked under armed guard. Surveilled and harassed by private police, strikers and local sympathizers targeted corporate property, destroyed rail and telegraph lines, and raided company stores. Despite the presence of state militia, local resistance drove many strikebreakers to abandon their tools and leave the region.[15] The Ohio Miners' Amalgamated Association decried, in the words of John McBride, owners' "disreputable methods of importing foreign labor under contract, secured by misrepresenting the conditions of affairs" in the mines.[16] Although many strikebreakers joined the union when given the opportunity, the effectiveness of racial difference as an "instrument" of labor control, couched in the age-old language of border fears and white subjugation and primed by partisan conflict, was characteristic of mounting political resistance across the borderland to the perceived excesses of Reconstruction.[17]

The relative frequency of Black strikebreaking in the coal fields of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois owed to two factors: geographic proximity to the continental interiority, which contained a supply of accessible (and potentially wage undercutting) labor in the form of southern Blacks, and the understanding, at least among some owners, that racial violence was more likely to produce an unfavorable result for strikers.[18] For example, when hundreds of white coal miners walked out in St. Clair County, Illinois, in February 1874, operator Robert W. Lemen replaced them with Black workers. Strikers' attempts to convince the strikebreakers to leave proved unsuccessful, and a "war of the races" commenced, as whites destroyed the African American work camp near Freeburg and expelled its inhabitants from the county, prompting the governor to send arms and ammunition to quell the riot.[19] Owners repeated such tactics that year in Massillon, Ohio, and in Illinois at Braidwood in 1877, Rapids City in 1880, and Grape Creek in 1886, where tensions escalated between striking National Federation of Miners and Mine Laborers and non-striking Knights of Labor, with the former eventually forcing the "plantation negroes" from Kentucky out of the mines.[20] White miners attacked Black strikebreakers in Knightsville and Brazil, Indiana, in April 1873 and at Coal Creek, Indiana, in April 1878, where white militiamen killed four African Americans.[21]

Diggers during the 1880s nevertheless identified owners, not racist workers, as the greatest source of intraclass racial division. Writing in the *National Labor Tribune* in the spring of 1885, one "miners' friend" in Staunton accused

southern Illinois operators of the "dark age" practices of pitting "the white man versus the black man." The author argued that such tactics may have worked before emancipation but would prove less effective in the "enlightened age" in which Black and white miners intermixed as fellow workers.[22] Although managers' adoption of Black strikebreakers was not always a conspiratorial design to divide the labor force, it was hardly a signal of racial awakening. As Joe William Trotter Jr. contends, supervisors tended to rationalize both Black hiring and Black exclusion through racist stereotypes—the greater pliability and inclination for hard labor (in the former), and a lack of reliability and "skill" (in the latter)—with a constant eye toward profits and power.[23] As one southern Illinois miner explained, the "old, old story" of the working class was that "organized capital wins," even in the face of worker unity.[24]

Other white elites expressed a variety of views toward "negro scabs." Some opposed them owing to kinship and social connections with white mining families; the resistance of others was expressly material. Businessmen often supported union labor because it meant higher wages, which led to a clientele with more disposable income and a greater overall volume of business.[25] Affluent whites also opposed Black strikebreakers based on stereotypes that Blacks were culturally or organically inclined toward criminal behavior or under the assumption that they would be thrown off to the burden of local taxpayers.[26] Prominent Democrats insisted that imported Black drudgers served a dual purpose: to break white labor and to flood the ballot boxes with Republican voters.[27] The southern press, meanwhile, reiterated the superiority of the section's race and labor relations by questioning the managerial techniques of Yankee owners who brought white workers to heel by "threatening them with negro competition."[28] Ultimately, the Black strikebreakers' condition as both a detested race and a despised class prompted white newspapers to cover them in a manner that was not proportional to their social and economic impact.[29] Whether broadcast widely by politicians, editors, union leaders, or circulated by the rank and file, this emphasis on Black strikebreaking led whites across the class spectrum to view African Americans as a "scab race," unassimilable and innately, even biologically, oriented toward crossing the picket line.[30]

REGARDLESS OF HOW OR WHY workers divided, owners conquered. Put another way, one might question whether the emergence of a "negro scab" archetype was more a result of working-class racism or, as many workers perceived it, the by-product of corporate interposition, goaded by a range of

elites, and intended to spur worker provocation, perhaps especially in the borderland.[31] Considering which social conditions promote racial cooperation or antagonism, several primary and often overlapping camps exist. Refining the much oversimplified (perhaps "vulgar") Marxist view that racism merely "trickles down the class structure from the commanding heights at which it is created," segmentation theorists highlight how divisions within the working class, particularly based on race, benefit the ownership class. This is true whether or not capitalists intentionally create and exploit those divisions.[32]

Split labor market theorists, meanwhile, focus on how wage differentials between races (Black and white), regions (North and South), nations, and world zones ("Global North" and "Global South") lead certain working-class sectors to turn on other workers. As a byproduct of capitalist development, whose structural unevenness produces extraordinarily imbalanced economic geographies, they argue that intra-class conflict tends to both stem from and strengthen racial identities, and racial competition increases as the position of racial groups within the labor market becomes less equal.[33] Moreover, "outside" workers—"cheap labor" from areas of peripheral economic development—typically lack information about local labor conditions, have less political clout, possess fewer personal and institutional ties to their new communities of employment, and are more desperate for immediate wages.

These divergences in political and economic resources and short-term employment options of different racial groups—between, in this case, more established native-born whites and African Americans or "becoming white" European immigrants—make minority strikebreaking likelier. The more dominant group of workers (native-born whites) perceive minority workers as threats to prevailing wage scales, the more likely the threat of replacement "transfers *class conflict* between workers and owners to *racial competition* in the labor market."[34] Finally, one cannot assume the economic rationality of racial prejudice in any of these scenarios or that working-class racism is, in the words of David Roediger, "a matter of bread alone." Roediger maintains, "Neither segmentation theory nor split labor market theories offer the possibility that racism comes from *both* above and below."[35]

Each of these perspectives—traditional Marxist, segmentation, split market, and critical whiteness—plays a role in explaining the interdependence of class, race, and the profit motive as they related to coal production in the borderland. The region's story of working-class racial division, however, was not class-neutral. Owners disproportionately benefited from the generation and exploitation of non-class differences, and countless miners sincerely

believed that owners, even more than workers, attempted to undermine the union by leveraging racial prejudice. Although Midwestern coal operators did not openly strategize to divide workers by race comparable to their southern counterparts, mine owners and their labor agents promoted racial competition by knowingly bringing non-white miners into existing labor conflicts where worker-on-worker enmity was likely—and surely expected—owing to both the racial category and non-union status of the arriving workers. The top-down fostering of intra-class antagonism is true whether or not worker importation was driven purely by the pursuit of cheap labor or other (segmenting) considerations. The long story of racial aversion on the border illuminates racial construction and partition as an ideological function of capitalism that is not identical to capitalism. Rather, it involves countless examples of capitalism mobilizing racism, as well as white supremacy taking on a life of its own through sadism and hatred uncoupled from direct material concerns in what historian Walter Johnson terms "the filthy pleasures of racial disgust."[36]

Over time, culturally dominant ideas about racial superiority and subordination—perpetuated by politicians, the clergy, and the media and animated by laws and customs—both created the basic historical conditions of racial inequality and contributed to new and added divisions among workers in specific settings. In addition to strikebreaking, yellow dog contracts, blacklisting, and open shop paternalism, in which owners offer "personal insurance type amenities in exchange for anti-union loyalty," employers' anti-labor strategies regularly featured a "divide and conquer" approach centered on race.[37] As Alonzo Ward posits, "Employers, eager to weaken labor unions, exploited racial tensions by exclusively employing Black strikebreakers in predominantly white labor conflicts."[38] Elsewhere, owners refused to hire Blacks out of fear of community backlash in which white employees might walk off the job or because they viewed them as less reliable or efficient than whites.

Although both white owners and white workers either accepted or rejected Black labor for a variety of reasons, the result was that, by design or not, locales with the largest race-based wage differences ultimately produced the lowest overall wages for all workers, Black and white. Whether a purposefully adopted strategy or an unintended outcome, owners reaped the long-term benefits of those ruptured labor forces, and race became the most persistent point of worker disunity, especially along borders where racial-labor systems adjoined.[39]

IN OTHER WORDS, BORDERS THEMSELVES, with their constituent "out-

siders" and potential "invaders," intensified the racial and class oppression of Black miners. At the same time, popular regional perceptions emphasized specific forms of Black laziness, criminality, and sexual deviancy, layering racial on top of miner stereotypes, typically with the effect of reinforcing both. They were old and familiar tropes: Black people as stupid yet clever, as idle yet born to labor, and as incognizant, suckered by zealous labor agents, yet willing to risk everything in the pursuit of gainful employment. Others painted Black miners, and strikebreakers in particular, as "anarchists," exposing yet again the connection between the Black and red scares. All the while, the press publicized dehumanizing characterizations of "beastly negro miners" as rapacious "brute" predators who sought white sexual partners and white prey through a range of both petty and violent crimes.[40]

This sense of Black workers as illegitimate meant that, for countless African Americans, strikebreaking was prudent if not essential for survival and perhaps even a form of "working-class activism."[41] It was perfectly rational for some (disproportionately white) workers to strike and for other (disproportionately minority) workers to break strikes, with varying levels of awareness.[42] As outsiders who lacked knowledge of local histories, institutions, and conditions, including labor actions, strikebreakers were frequently misled by labor agents, corporate representatives, and mine managers. In a Black population that was not heavily unionized and often barred from doing so, the word *scab* did not have the "punitive powers" and almost universally negative connotation that it did in working-class white communities.[43] For many, the relief of immediate employment superseded the longer-term possibility of incorporation into a union. Even in cases in which African Americans admitted to having been deceived by labor agents, white and Black miners confronted the reality that the latter had little choice but to remain on the job. As one white Illinois miner put it, although many strikebreakers sympathized with the cause of unified labor, "their poverty would force them to work."[44]

Workers who crossed the picket line were not, however, ideologically anti-union, and many Black strikebreakers consciously and shrewdly balanced a strikebreaking strategy with attempts to self-organize or close ranks with unionists.[45] Nor is it true that all Black hirelings were simply duped into breaking strikes; many were understandably distrustful of white unions and desperate for wages.[46] Although it is difficult to track exact wage differentials within northern labor markets, wages in the South, the recruitment region of most Black strikebreakers, especially during periods of labor shortage and low levels of immigration from Europe, were consistently 40 to 50 percent below

those in the North. Because most African American strikebreaking occurred in industries common in the South, including coal, steel, and railroads, strikebreakers arbitraged the gap between regional markets. For northern Blacks, union exclusion and lower pay were often reason enough to intervene in labor disputes. Even in industries that hired across the color line on an equal wage basis, African Americans were typically cut off from preferred jobs and suffered curtailed rates of promotion.[47] In effect, white preference created a feedback loop that first discouraged or prohibited Black membership and then cast Blacks, far more than whites, as innately "anti-union" when they served as strikebreakers. This scab label, so common on the border, then rationalized further Black exclusion from organized labor.

Of course, African American workers were also swayed toward strikebreaking by the Black bourgeoisie, who sometimes actively recruited strikebreakers from their own race and whose "uplift" ideology typically underscored deference to white politicians and employers as a means of economic advancement.[48] During times of rising class conflict, when occasions for working-class organization presented themselves, this type of racial solidarity constituted a deeply conservative position, undergirded by messages from Black businessmen and preachers to "Buy Black," defend the color line, promote red scare, and oppose the "white man's union."[49]

Although Booker T. Washington had once belonged to the Knights of Labor in West Virginia, by the 1890s he declared that trade unions were hindering Black progress. While at times privately working toward integration, Washington publicly assured white businessmen that African American workers were obedient and untempted by "the red flag of anarchy."[50] Violence against Black strikebreakers across the Lower Midwest often reinforced Washington's anti-union views, as periods of intensified racial discrimination amplified racial consciousness and flattened class distinctions *within* Black communities, even as those distinctions sharpened.[51] As one African American newspaper in Kansas wrote following attacks on imported miners in Illinois, "They hang the negro in the South, but they are not so bad in the North; they just simply starve him to death by labor unions."[52]

Given the extent of white racism, split markets, and Black middle-class antiradicalism, perhaps it is remarkable not that there were African American strikebreakers but that their numbers were not far greater. Industrial relations in the late nineteenth-century borderland reveal that countless Black workers eschewed scabbing and defied accommodation. Those who gained admittance to predominantly white unions such as the UMW tended to engage

in labor activism equal to or above that of white unionists, often defending those unions through violence against Black strikebreakers.[53] The *Indianapolis Freeman*, although its editors condemned discriminatory unions, prioritized attacks on white owners who refused to employ Black workers "in times of peace" but eagerly introduced them into conflicts "for the express purpose of defeating white workmen."[54]

Such views gained a new platform through Du Bois, who gradually eclipsed Washington as the nation's most influential African American reformer. Whereas the particularly middle-class NAACP shied away from engaging organized labor, Du Bois chided white owners who hired Blacks to prevent unionization or because they accepted lower wages than whites, cited Black anti-unionism as ammunition for racist white workers, and encouraged Blacks to denounce exclusionary unions and join integrated ones.[55] An emerging Black labor left soon urged African American workers to unionize in part because labor organization would prove the best recourse against racial, as well as economic, injustice.[56]

Meanwhile, racial segregation often yielded short-term advantages for workers designated as "white," including higher wages and "first hired, last fired" status. Racism was not, therefore, "a misperception of workers' 'real interests' in specific, immediate contexts," as Rudi Batzell notes.[57] Still, the limitations of those benefits must be weighed against their drawbacks, as the pressing and often provisional dividends of job and wage preference for certain white workers came at the expense of a more collective advancement. For many, the benefits of "whiteness"—expressed through outright racial nationalism or, more complexly, through the promotion and protection of "traditional" values—did not outweigh its costs, as "white" statuses failed to translate to class mobility. In this sense, "white privilege" became not simply a recitation of competing oppressions or a means of tabulating favoritism in terms of earnings; it was also an illusion of white racial parity that obscured the profound material inequality among white people. The belief by dominant racial-ethnic worker groups that their needs and aims are similar to those of all other workers is essential for the organization of interracial unions, which weakens racial prejudice and racial and gender disparities.[58] However, the general inability of white miners and white labor to meaningfully or permanently unite with nonwhite workers—fueled in the coal industry by the mass perception of "scabbing" as a racial as well as an occupational category—kept *all* workers disempowered.

The specter of the "negro scab" saw borderlanders cast African American

miners as the latest in a long "invasion" that flouted local, racialized understandings of community. As historian Ronald L. Lewis identifies, Black diggers imported to racially homogeneous districts were not merely "scabs" but "*black* scabs, and the white miners displayed at least as much hostility to their color as to their status as strikebreakers."[59] Operators, meanwhile, exploited breaches between races and labor regimes and pinpointed the border as a mechanism of worker control. They occasionally defied racial exclusion by hiring Black strikebreakers while also capitalizing on scarcity fears and perpetuating stereotypes of both class and race.

Owners likewise well understood the Ohio River as a physical boundary separating union-dense from union-thin communities, as well as popular attitudes toward unions and strikebreakers, as evidenced by their great precautions to detain Black replacement workers. As one observer later recalled, "As soon as a carload of Negroes crossed the Illinois line, the car was locked, armed guards posted by railroad and coal companies, and from that moment the men were prisoners, slaves, unable to quit."[60] By 1890, relative poverty, regional enmity, and decades of racial exclusion, exacerbated by split markets, continued to give economic competition on the border an added racial and spatial dimension, as well as a sense of urgency. Although the idea that Black workers were replacing white unionists knowingly and in large numbers was far more myth than reality, the pairing of "negro" with "scab" proved catastrophic for the cause of working-class unity, and its stubborn rootedness would shape labor and social relations in the borderland for the next half-century. A momentous countervailing force, however, lay just on the horizon.

CHAPTER 10

Two Worlds

A breakthrough occurred in Columbus, Ohio, in 1890 with the founding of the United Mine Workers of America. Building on union democracy traditions of the American Miners' Association and the Knights of Labor, UMW architects, despite their statuses as native-born whites and Anglo-Saxon pick miners, realized the necessity of the industrial form to their primary aim of disciplining the market. Whereas the "skilled" attributes of craft unions inclined them to racial and ethnic segregation, the nature of their labor provided miners a unique capacity to disrupt the color line. For "unskilled" workers, self-preservation required some degree of racial comity, and, as always, class struggle held the potential to forge and augment interracial partnership. In the face of overwhelming odds, the early organization developed what economist Herbert Northrup terms a stance of "racial equalitarianism," or statutory institutional equality.[1] The UMW's constitution barred discrimination based on "creed, color, nationality," its leaders adopted firm stances against white supremacy. They also made special efforts to hold heavily Black districts as the "primary importance" of African American miners in building the union that became, according to historian Herbert Gutman, "crystal-clear." Although racial discrimination within locals was common, such practices were—and were understood as—"contrary to explicit national policy."[2] Whereas owner organizations were almost exclusively white and, in most cases, Protestant and native-born, UMW leadership was interracial from its inception, and R. F. Warren, a Black miner from Ohio, served on the union's first National Executive Board.[3] The union's relative pluralism prompted W. E. B. Du Bois and other non-accommodationist race leaders to praise it for "taking an interest in the colored man as a worker."[4] Mine pits soon became among the most

racially integrated spaces in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century borderland—a resounding contrast to the exclusion that had characterized the region since its settler-colonial roots.

Official policies of non-discrimination and racial integration were not, of course, tantamount to equality. From the outset, the union nominated and elected African Americans to national and local offices, though not in numbers proportional to their membership.[5] Certain leadership factions (the Populist wing of Patrick McBryde, John McBride, and Phil Penna, rather than the more business-accommodating Republican bloc of Michael D. Ratchford and John Mitchell) proved more amenable to both the broad, alliance-minded labor republicanism and, eventually, public ownership that fostered organic interracial partnership. And, consequently, as the former caucus receded before the latter, Black representation in union officialdom devolved over the course of the decade.[6]

On the ground, in communities with preexisting race-based barriers, miners continued to possess an array of fluid attitudes, employing various labor-racial arrangements specific to time and place. These included denying supervisory positions to Black miners and consigning them to the dirtiest and hardest labor, which they resisted through physical mobility, higher productivity rates, and making alliances with non-English speaking (and often similarly despised) immigrants.[7] Through the tiered classifications of toil—known colloquially as "white man's work" and "nigger work"—Black miners were more likely to travail inside the mine as loaders and generally served in more demanding (labeled "unskilled") tasks.[8] These were reinforced by occasional anti-Black humor and the downplaying of white strikebreakers in union publications.[9] Yet the overall thrust of federation through the early and mid-1890s was relatively—and, at times, astonishingly—inclusive, as the union advanced a process by which masses of white workers, despite being conditioned by racialized replacement fears, came to understand their interests primarily in class rather than racial terms.

This story of interracial comity in defiance of tradition and the vast moneyed and police power of owners remained, for many decades, a sort of hidden history. It was not until the 1960s that Gutman first scoured the pages of the *United Mine Workers Journal* to reveal the "local world" of Black unionists and the extent of interracial partnership in the coal fields.[10] Historian Herbert Hill later countered with a polemical critique—one that misrepresented union sources and caricatured Gutman's thesis—underscoring the persistence of white supremacy.[11] Joe William Trotter Jr., for one, carved out a middle-way

position by acknowledging race as the most salient division among coal miners even as the UMW created a "work culture and politics that cut across racial and ethnic division" that far outpaced industrial unionists in steel and meatpacking. In this telling, Black miners were neither a romantic proletariat nor passive victims, but thinking agents—if often highly constrained—who developed creative strategies to shape their own lives as unionists or strikebreakers in response to "different levels of economic inequality, institutional segregation, and discrimination." Finally, Trotter argues against a harmonious/antagonistic binary by insisting that the scale and depth of interracial unity varied according to setting, and included "a pattern of stiff resistance" in parts of Illinois.[12]

In addition to official UMW policy, the non-discrimination discourse of its weekly newspaper, the *United Mine Workers Journal*, defied the free white labor consensus by engendering new forms of working-class interracialism, including through a cross-pollinating labor populism of miners, railway workers, agrarian reformers, and economic egalitarians.[13] Portraying society as divided between either "producers" and "non-producers" or social "classes," rather than competing races or racialized species of laborers, the *Journal* espoused labor republicanism, denounced concentrated capital, critiqued "wage slavery" as a form of anti-democratic dependency, introduced ideas about socialism and working-class internationalism, and urged cooperation across gender and racial lines.[14] Editorials directed most of their ire against what one miner deemed the five classes of traitors: capitalists, anti-labor politicians, scabs, the anti-labor press, and the pulpit.[15]

The *Journal* did not promote a single, coherent philosophy regarding race and immigration. Its pages simultaneously publicized internationalism and condemned the "lower classes" of foreign nationals; protested "wage slavery" and presented "Vans," "Goths," and "Mongolians" as natural "slaves"; censured racial discrimination and characterized African, Asian, and certain European populations as backward; and at times encouraged the migration of southern Blacks into union worksites while denouncing the importation of race-specific "negro scabs." Even so, most union activists understood such labels as fodder for worker division.[16] Writing under the name "Freedom," a Washington, Indiana, miner cautioned diggers against using the term "pauper laborer" to describe fellow workers who were simply looking to better their condition. In fact, he deemed the entire immigration issue "a scarecrow . . . one used by labor leaders, bible babblers, prating preachers, [and] pickpocket politicians." The best approach to so-called competitors was not to demonize them

but to convince them of the advantages of unionization.[17] In other words, though migration and immigration often had very real consequences for certain blocs of miners, the ideal solution was not exclusion based on race but a broader front through radical inclusion.

Although the *Journal* seldom included any lengthy or systematic discussion of Jim Crow, and coverage of anti-Black group violence was even rarer, it regularly addressed the wider problem of the color line.[18] Editorialists, both Black and white, condemned "race prejudice" among white workers and celebrated their efforts at integration and statutory equality.[19] The paper reprinted abolitionist speeches, including those of Frederick Douglass, and took aim at Lost Cause interpretations of the Civil War and Reconstruction, denying that the latter was a period of "negro domination."[20] It also featured regular columns from African American correspondents across the borderland, and its pages saw unionists discuss Black history and consider race and racism as social constructs rather than biological facts.[21] These organic intellectuals became familiar names in white households and lily-white communities as part of a popular forum of working-class cosmopolitanism that was unprecedented in the region.[22] While Black and white unionists debated the efficacy of a "class-only" approach to organizing, the *Journal* mainstreamed coverage of concepts like race-conscious recruitment and the adoption of policies to account for white supremacy and its impacts. Despite Herbert Hill's assertions to the contrary, the *Journal* consistently addressed "the problems of race hatred and race antagonism," maintaining that they could only be solved through "a more complete organization of workers, both white and colored."[23]

NOTIONS OF COMMON BONDAGE—of "no color line but simply a slave line," as one Black miner phrased it—underwrote the *Journal*'s class-based interracialism.[24] Some scholars view those "wage slavery" discourses as largely allegorical, used primarily by white workers with the effect of soft-pedaling chattel slavery. Historian Robert J. Steinfeld argues that wage labor was fully synonymous with "free labor," which he defines as the right to quit a job without "criminal punishment or non-pecuniary penalties."[25] Yet this definition fails to account for how gradations of unfreedom, or "degrees" of slavery, were also shaped and exacerbated by low-demand markets, geographic isolation and immobility, a lack of personal savings, the absence of kinship networks, racism and sexism, and the basic realities of asymmetrical power.[26] Wage forfeiture or the threat of unemployment, much less managerial decisions that

increase the risk of workplace accidents, might not be pecuniary punishments in a technical sense, but they are also forms of economic violence, owing to their direct corollaries of hunger, homelessness, material deprivation, and bodily harm.

In reality, miners' claims of enslavement represented more than mere metaphor.[27] As Alex Gourevich maintains, "wage slave" meant something entirely new within multiracial industrial unions. Wage slavery politics in the UMW *were* undoubtedly strategic, but they were not simply a cudgel in which self-serving toilers consciously exaggerated their plight for maximum rhetorical impact, or what economist Norman Ware calls "an empty shibboleth of the soap box orator."[28] Rather, the precarity and debasement of non-unionized mine labor was such that diggers across races and ethnicities sincerely viewed chattel slavery—or what they understood as chattel slavery—as preferable to their present condition.

African Americans commonly employed the "slavery" allegory, too. Black unionists in Illinois charged mine owners with "living in slavery times" by enacting the practices and possessing the mentalities of Old South masters, and those in Indiana and Ohio regularly echoed such themes.[29] Moreover, conceptions of bondage were never rendered wholly through the afterlives of sectionalism. Immigrant, non-Anglophonic, and "conditionally white" colliers brought their own traditions, expectations, and experiences of unfreedom. The miners' imagining of the role of women and children within this "slave contract" suggests a fusion of systems of unfreedom related to culturally conditioned understandings of "protection," "bondage," "servitude," and patriarchal-paternal relations.

Many miners indeed acknowledged that the legal and practical constraints of wage earning were not identical to those of chattel slavery, as wage earners had the legal right to turn down employment, if only to solicit a different "master."[30] Besides, the fact that Gilded Age workers threatened to but did not actually self-enslave is a testament to the valence of the Thirteenth Amendment and the (largely) acknowledged gap between chattel and wage slavery.[31] Yet the "unskilled" and uneven nature of mine work—as well as the risk of atomization by race, religion, language, gender, or region—rendered "wage slavery" politics especially apt.[32] In a political and social context in which historical subtleties and arguments of degree threatened to fracture a burgeoning movement or obscure rather than clarify the miners' position, "slavery" was not only a politically useful concept that cut across racial and ethnic divides; it was also a sincere valuation, more literal and universal than perhaps histo-

rians have credited. In short, the group most equipped to describe their own experiences with labor market coercion—miners—called themselves "slaves" largely because they understood their condition as not free.

Predictably, elites pushed back against the idea that wage work constituted enslavement. The open shop advocate *Chicago Tribune* described "wage slavery" rhetoric as a type of "poison" based on the idea of "reversing [class] conditions" through "anarchical methods." Editors argued that rather than a form of constraint, wage employment was consent through covenant, and "both parties to the contract are equally free to make it or abstain from making it." They held that owners, not workers, were far more inhibited, because whereas the latter was ensured payment, the former was a "slave" to the uncertainty of profits.[33] Although unionists slowly adopted the less vivid term "wage work," the persistence of "wage slavery" threw into question the legacy of the Civil War, including the veracity of the Emancipation Proclamation, the supposedly progressive arc of U.S. history from slavery to liberty, and the very meaning of "free labor."[34] Overall, UMW wage slavery was revealing of a process in which white, Black, and foreign-born miners in the borderland sought—sometimes prosaically and clumsily—to define "freedom" not as the "liberty" to individual contract but protection from open border markets and endless undercutting in a system of capitalist domination.

However, common class condition ceased to be a unifying concept when imparted with racial connotations. Forged out of the white heat of amalgamation fear and economic competition, the notion of "white slavery"—of white workers as uniquely exploited under wage capitalism—encapsulated the incongruence of attempting to transcend the color line through interracial unionization while relying on tropes that presented bondage for white people as unnatural in a way that it was not for Blacks. Although the multifaceted and transnational expression "white slavery" dated to the antebellum era, serving as a metaphor for racialized class injustice, as well as a more literal description of light-skinned bondsmen, it was popularized throughout the 1890s by the plays of Bartley Campbell and the speeches of William Jennings Bryan.[35] Union miners often used "wage slavery" and "white slavery" interchangeably to describe their arduous task of blasting and loading. Still others employed it to relate a host of labor conditions and worker groups: monopolies, the use of federal injunctions, and the "ignorant, filthy, and immoral" immigrant populations who increasingly comprised the nation's army of mine workers.[36] "The abolitionists said . . . the colored man must be freed," one unionist complained. "What of the poor white man? Today he is in a worse condition than

the colored man ever was."[37] By pitting Black slaves against beggarly whites, rather than workers against owners, the white slavery allegory inflamed far more than it quelled racial antagonism.

"White slavery" discourses nevertheless existed side-by-side with condemnations of race prejudice, as unionists endorsed racial inclusion and equality as a means of preventing the "enslavement" of white men. This included conjuring "white slavery" to characterize the condition of non-union miners, especially in the South, as crueler than chattel bondage.[38] In Cincinnati, labor leaders warned that "race prejudice" hindered unionization and enabled "white slavery."[39] Southern Indiana newspapers highlighted the "white slaves" of non-union districts south of the Ohio River.[40] And socialists in Illinois contrasted "the absolute slavery of the past" with "the white slavery of today."[41] By emphasizing shared oppression, assertions that mine work was "worse than slavery" had some potential to unite racially disparate workers.[42] Nevertheless, such language often involved whitewashing chattel bondage and, by extension, minimized white supremacy as an independent force.

The supposed contradiction of white men enslaved permeated miner culture. The 1899 tune, "Song of the White Slave," written by unionist Frank J. Hayes of Breese, Illinois, exemplified the construction of racially qualified working-class grievance. Published in the *United Mine Workers Journal*, "Song of the White Slave" was a ballad of unqualified misery: "frail children," "dying groans," and "deathbeds pale." The song underscored the constant and psychologically gnawing dangers faced by coal diggers who, like the slaves of old, were "chained by the hand of greed" and labored "devoid of gain." Asking why natural resources were "so dear" yet human life "so cheap," Hayes ruminated on the expendability of the miner, who welcomed death as a relief from the agony of a life marred by toil and want. All the same, Hayes's rendering of "white slaves," rather than the race-neutral "wage slave," presented white workers, not Black, as particularly exploited, thus accentuating the supposedly aberrant condition of white unfreedom. This theme of ongoing (white) bondage also led Hayes to challenge the meaning and emancipationist inheritance of the Civil War, which, he implied, had liberated slaves but manacled formerly free men:

> *All slaves were freed, you cry—*
> *Nay, that's a rich man's lie!*
> *Oh, see the white slaves die*
> *In shops of pain.*[43]

Above all, the persistence of "white slavery" scripts exposed the continued gap between aims and actualities. Writing during the heightened tensions of the 1894 strike, Ohio organizer W. C. Pearce explained that while UMW officials disavowed racism and national chauvinism, the reality was often far different. Proclaiming that "race prejudice and religious bitterness are relics of a barbarous age . . . detrimental to our cause," he accused white unionists of "not thinking deep enough on these subjects" of racial and national inclusion and equality. Urging against man's "baser and more brutal passions," Pearce denounced the "animalism" of discrimination—of "thinking your race of people are any better than any other race"—in favor of "the broad universal platform of the brotherhood of man." Although he maintained that all miners' interests were "identical . . . irrespective of nationality, creed or color," Pearce's position did not account for the unique injustices faced by Black labor.[44]

Even so, the UMW of the early 1890s continued to attempt to grasp both the internal and external causes of depressed unionization and how they interacted with one another. The *Journal* recognized anti-Black racism as a colossal barrier to union organizing, especially in the South, and echoed the opinion of the abolitionist Wendell Phillips in thinking that workers suffered most from a basic lack of resources. "The greatest weakness of our association of workingmen is that it cannot wait," Phillips once explained. "It does not know where to get its food for next week. If it is idle for two days the funds of the society are exhausted. Capital can wait . . . it can tire you out and starve you out."[45] When it came to pinpointing the source of "deplorable division among workers," by late 1893, the *Journal* accused observers of overstating the timelessness of the color line and "underrating" owners, who, unlike workers, possessed "state organization," including the capability to enact convict labor and racial segregation. Editor Patrick McBryde avowed that "capital and its paid diplomats, in the persons of wily, scheming underlings, spies, cutthroats, traitors and the rest seem to fade into insignificance as barriers to the great desideratum when compared to the 'color line.'"[46] Of course, owner power, worker poverty, and intra-class racism were deeply interlaced, and unionists often highlighted how industrialists disciplined labor by sowing discord among their employees through the threat of replacement. Printed that same year, "The Coal Baron's Song" focused on low pay and unsafe workplaces as sources of miners' indignity; it also disclosed the gnawing compulsion of toiling under constant risk of being supplanted:

I'm willing to add that the work is bad
And dangerous, too, to face;
But when one stops and reels and drops,
There's another to take his place.[47]

Other verses underscored class unity across the color line to prevent dreaded competition. Written by southern Ohio miner Jonathan Costlett, the poem "I Am in Rendville Now" spoke to the benefits of interracial cooperation, celebrated integrated communities of "every kind of color, from indigo to brown," and praised Black organizers. This assessment of racial amicability contrasted with fearmongering reports from regional newspapers that Rendville had become "a pest place of industrial leprosy that has infested our valley [with a] horde of barbarian niggers," driving away white families in the process.[48] Costlett also contrasted a miner's quality of life in the union towns of "Hoosierdom" and Illinois, where "a man's a man" regardless of "race or creed," with non-union regions in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Alabama, where the "evils" of segregation and convict labor emboldened tyrannical owners.[49] Similarly, J. J. Sullivan's "Look Out for Number One," also published in 1894, reminded fellow miners of the paramountcy of interracial comradeship. "Be his color white or tawny," Sullivan reiterated, each miner should be assessed by their commitment to other miners—by their class perspective and not their racial status.[50]

Early union literature also discouraged concepts that associated race or nationality with either union status or "natural" labor condition. The *Journal* published essays denouncing the phrase "pauper labor" because it stereotyped poor persons, and immigrants in particular, as a distinct and unorganizable bloc of workers. The notion of "pauper" competition was a lie designed to "foster national antipathies" and "breed discord among toilers," one critic explained. Although they might be an unwanted addition to the "already crowded ranks" of American miners, the new immigrants were, in reality, "honest, willing, hearty workers," not beggars and criminals.[51]

Other unionists implored their comrades against pathologizing immigrants and to instead aggressively engage the recent arrivals. "To look down on a poor person with contempt is abominable," one Knight of Labor argued, even if they do compete for your jobs. Instead, he urged union men to punch up toward owners and the system that sowed such poverty and division. "We are brothers in misery," he concluded, "fighting in one great army of protests and revolutionists against the monarchical system of oppression . . . we are all

'poor persons' because the land and the instruments of labor have been taken from us."[52]

Above all, UMW discourses attacked convict leasing as a direct violation of "free labor" and a reconstituted "slave trade" in which capitalist "masters" sold slaves north rather than south.[53] Unionists condemned "America's disgrace" for its "monstrous" injustice and, more so, for how it "cheapened" what one miner referred to as "honest miners within our borders."[54] By the late 1880s, the prevalence of southern "slave mines," where owners leased convict laborers from state prison systems to suppress employee compensation and undercut union organizing, led to an outbreak of labor uprisings, most famously in Coal Creek in East Tennessee.[55] Convict labor weakened union wage standards; convicts' dearth of purchasing power also bankrupted local merchants, convict stockades blighted communities, their transience precluded civic institutions such as churches and schools, their want of experience endangered lives, and their lack of legal recourse for injustices suffered at the hands of owners undermined union precedents.[56] Unionists argued that states that adopted convict leasing turned their workplaces into literal "slave marts," ensuring that "honest" workers could never "seek shelter within her borders."[57] In other words, when it came to labor power across cores and peripheries, to guarantee the dignity of one part, unionists would have to organize the whole.

BORDERS WERE, THEREFORE, CRITICAL to the strategic thinking of UMW officials. While unionists supported wider worker incorporation in theory, and even as a general rule, they also understood regulation as essential to self-preservation and that circumstances frequently called for the type of calculated restriction that would form one component of market unionism. Most miners deemed union status as the basis of such regulation, but some also added alienating ethnic qualifiers. For instance, Indiana miners in Sullivan and Clay counties formally denounced "imported labor" of all types while singling out particular offenders based on language and race. In the fall of 1891, in the name of protecting both their livelihoods and "American institutions," the miners passed a series of resolutions condemning labor commissioners who sought non-English speaking "pauper labor." Yet many saw the Mid-South of Kentucky and Tennessee—a veritable "slave land" whose convict systems continuously threatened union standards north of the Ohio River—as the more immediate threat. As such, they added a declaration to

protest "cheap African labor of the South to the exclusion of white labor."[58] Put another way, even strong union states were weakest on the perimeter, and organizing the rim—the mining regions closest to the South's "cheap" labor pool—became vital.

The National Progressive Union had first identified southern Illinois as possessing unique barriers to unionization. Noting the harsh and sudden impact of proletarianization on the "plains of Egypt" as industrialization compelled masses of rural "corn huskers" to transition "from the farms to the towns," union missionaries bemoaned the "sad condition of the mining villages of southern Illinois" and the "inexorable aversion to organization" among their workingmen. In pondering why "men raised to chopping wood and farming" were willing to "work so cheap," one activist cited the extensiveness of poverty and indebtedness to bankers and "eastern land grabbers."[59] In his 1889 address to southern Illinois miners, published in the *National Labor Tribune*, organizer James C. Heenan noted the region's relative underdevelopment but also criticized the "unorganized, inactive, and unmanly attitude" of Egyptian diggers which had, he maintained, resulted in a state of "abject slavery" throughout the region's mining communities. Heenan sensed in southern Illinois's District No. 13 remnants of the "old union spirit" that had characterized the American Miners' Association, but he also warned against too much individual thought and action rather than concern for "the craft" as a whole. Appealing directly to the miners' "manhood to act" and denouncing owners who would "keep us longer divided," he deemed it up to workers themselves to "bury all prejudices and contentions" for the sake of wider consolidation.[60]

Throughout the early 1890s, UMW organizers understood that various domains and subdistricts posed slightly different obstacles based on their economies' local geopolitics and cultures. Natural and political environment, river transport, and proximity to "cheap" labor and non-union mines in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Alabama continued to distinguish what UMW president John McBride referred to as the "southern competitive field," or the mining areas along the Ohio River that sold in the markets of Cincinnati, Louisville, Evansville, and New Orleans.[61] The southern Indiana coal fields and their connecting rail lines in Vigo, Sullivan, Vermillion, Knox, Greene, Warrick, and Gibson counties were within the Ohio and Wabash River valleys and were likewise perceived as vulnerable to influxes of Black migration.[62] Organizing was frustratingly slow in Evansville, where prominent Democrats continued to accuse Republicans of wanting to "flood" the state with "cheap pauper labor" from both Europe and the South.[63] By the spring of 1893, Indi-

ana district secretary John H. Kennedy had become almost disillusioned by the lack of progress in southwestern Indiana, referring to "the southern part of the state" as a "great drawback" to unionization in the region.[64]

Patrick H. Donnelly, former district president of the Coal Miners' Benevolent and Protective Association who had been organizing in Illinois for more than a decade, argued that labor's struggle in the state's interior could never be won so long as workers on the border remained "in poverty and rags."[65] Reviewing the status of the UMW in the Midwest, Donnelly called Little Egypt "a thorn in the flesh" of the miners' cause and highlighted the importance of bringing both it and the "southern counties" of Indiana and Pennsylvania—a sprawling, river-oriented region of "slave labor"—into the union fold. In addition to persistent intraclass racial and ethnic tensions and proximity to easily accessible pockets of workers in the South, he asserted that abnormally intransigent and law-defying owners kept earnings low and created a "flood of cheap coal" that undermined union fields to the north. These interrelated factors made southern Illinois a "miserable" environment for union activists. Invoking Abraham Lincoln, Donnelly maintained that Illinois, and ultimately the nation, could not remain divided between "free" and "slave" portions but must become all one thing or all the other. As he saw it, that march toward a truly national union had to begin by "revolutionizing" the poorer and lower-waged borderland.[66]

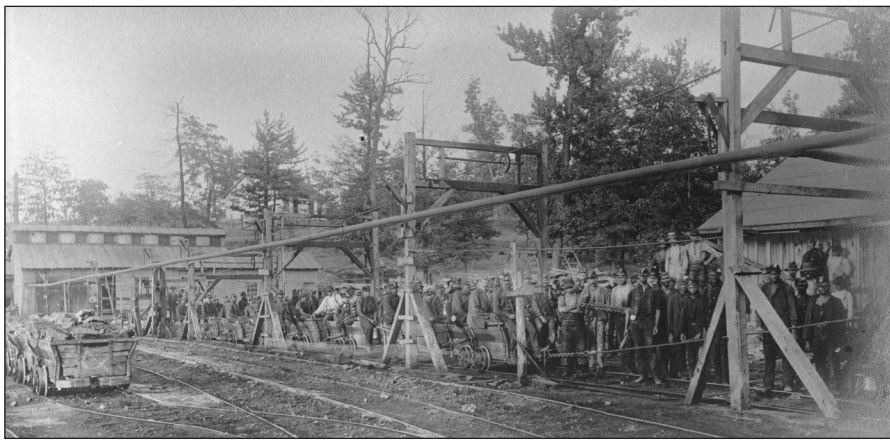
Union miners understood the power and importance of conversion, especially in dense non-union areas and during periods of institutional decline. As membership rolls jumped in the spring of 1891, UMW spokesmen recognized that there were countless "honest and good workmen" who did not belong to a labor organization, largely "poor mechanics" who could not, for some reason (location, exclusion) obtain "dignified work" within a union. Although one such miner insisted that most non-unionists were "ignorant foreigners or negroes," he also believed that such toilers were often "the first to kick" against employers owing to the extreme exploitation they suffered. In other words, strikebreakers' desperation and relatively brutal working conditions made them easy converts and, once reformed, among the most militant unionists.[67] It was no secret that "the spirit of bigotry and intolerance" that leaders often admonished remained primary hurdles to recruitment, especially in certain locales. As McBride explained to the national convention in 1893, "Internecine strife occasioned by religion and nationality" was "more pronounced" in Illinois than in other states, likely owing to its ethnic pluralism, especially in the northern fields. Even so, McBride considered "the greatest obstacles to

progress" to be the very regions in most dire need of union assistance, including the Illinois and Indiana borderland, where worker defeats and union setbacks seemed to beget more rapidly the forces of reaction.[68]

Union organizers continued to describe Little Egypt in the mid-1890s as a dead zone characterized by unscrupulous operators and indifferent employees. One correspondent in Saline County, where a string of small defeats had sent worker morale plummeting, suggested that the region was simply too isolated, as the price of coal was insufficient to cover the freight expense to Chicago or even St. Louis. Observing too many communities where "no Knight of Labor need apply," he predicted bleak prospects for the future and wished for "some kind of a machine that [might] open the people's eyes."[69] Frustrated by the *Journal*'s lack of coverage of southern Illinois despite its critical location, miner and People's Party crusader Marion J. Goings of Lebanon revived longstanding tropes concerning pathology and "civilization" to rationalize how immensely exploited miners could possess "no organization and no desire for one." The word *Egypt* once conjured "the most enlightened part of the globe," Goings explained, "but now, when applied to Southern Illinois means anything else . . . and compared with the laboring men throughout our country, we are very much below par." This condition was marked by hostility toward outside influences, as workers aligned with bosses in branding union organizers "agitators" or "lazy." Although miners in St. Clair County had been at the forefront of the profession's organization during the Civil War, Goings suggested other cultural factors were holding back rural Egyptians.[70]

Even as the Panic of 1893 sent coal markets into chaos, slowing unionization through the middle of the decade, the UMW continued making inroads in some deep southern Illinois and Indiana counties.[71] Activists organized the Diamond and First Avenue mines in Evansville, where roughly 25 percent of miners were unionized, and a cooperative mine, formed through the Central Labor Union, won prized city contracts.[72] They soon instigated a series of boycotts and walkouts, only to be replaced by Black strikebreakers in the winter and spring of 1893–94 and again in the summer of 1897.[73] Miners also made headway against infamously obstinate owners, such as S. Wyle Little, founder of a company town along the Evansville & Indianapolis Railroad who had successfully blocked unions from their worksites for years.[74]

Operators responded to labor's momentum by flooding the market with non-union "slave coal" from Kentucky. Some, including the St. Bernard Coal Company of Earlington, even moved their offices across the river into Indiana to exploit the split market.[75] When southern Indiana miners urged their com-



KENTUCKY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Figure 6. St. Bernard Coal Company in Earlington, Kentucky. Founded in 1870 as a company town, Earlington became a regional coal hub whose operations were notorious among the United Mine Workers of Indiana and Illinois as a source of non-union replacement labor.

munities to patronize local (union) coal, elites drew on longstanding invasion fears. Charging unionists with undermining the public good by creating "barriers to free interchange," they alleged that driving down coal production (and labor demand) in Kentucky would simply result in "a stampede of unemployed men to Evansville to compete with the miners already here." Miners countered that they were not in fact boycotting Kentucky coal, only non-union coal, exported by "the most unscrupulous and depraved desperadoes" who force their employees to "live as slaves." Challenging their critics to "cross the river" and go to work in non-union mines, unionists reiterated that the situation was one of "servility, depravity and blackleggism" on one side and "a desire to establish halfway decent conditions" on the other.[76] (See Figure 6.)

Although the boycott could not combat the ease with which capital, along with its hirelings and commodities, moved freely across state and regional borders, the UMW began to carve out a small but militant "stronghold in Egypt."[77] Diggers organized in St. Johns, Muddy Valley, and Carterville. They successfully struck for higher wages in Centralia, at the intersection of two of the state's largest coal-producing counties.[78] Labor actions converged with electoral campaigns, such as in Murphysboro, where Populist organizers urged miners to "vote as they struck," independent from the two-party system that had proven incapable of delivering the "poverty-stricken" region.[79] In Du Quoin, fifteen hundred diggers walked out in 1891 as part of a wave of May Day strikes for an eight-hour day, and quarrels with private guards and pro-

coal operator law enforcement—the violent coercion of mass arrests and court injunctions—produced a unifying effect among the agitators. Each run-in with management reinforced the miners' belief that, as one southern Illinois organizer explained, "organized capital [is] a power that has no soul."[80] The region grew in import before the bituminous coal strike of 1894, when one observer described the widening importance of southern Illinois and Indiana, whose miners "have the most to fear" should the strike fail. Even the Populist Phil Penna referred to southern Illinois as "the key to the situation."[81]

The 1894 strike saw union miners become, along with the Pullman Strike and Coxey's Army of unemployed workers, part of a wave of labor militancy in the Midwest not seen since 1877. When owners used the economic depression as an excuse to reduce wages, unionists in Egypt bolstered their growing militant reputation by commandeering a train car, demolishing company machinery, filling shafts with debris, and exchanging gunfire with mine guards before the governor ordered in the state militia.[82] Across the Wabash River in southwestern Indiana, where non-union mines in Kentucky had become a "great menace" to labor's cause by inundating the region with cheap coal, the UMW sent a delegation that included "prominent colored miner" Henry Wilson to Earlington to persuade the Kentuckians to cease digging.[83] When that proved ineffective—operators used both private guards and police to prevent unionists from reaching non-union mines—union men resorted to sabotage by banding with rail workers to watch timetables, patrol rail yards, and side-track coal trains; in a few cases, they burned coal cars and reportedly attempted to destroy bridges.[84]

These trials of unity and resistance were buttressed by unprecedented appeals to interracial harmony and discourses centered on "wage slavery." In her poem "To Workingmen," Mrs. J. Jasper of Du Quoin compared southern Illinois strikers to bondsmen owing to the dangerous conditions within the mines and the dependency wrought by exploitative contracts and company stores.[85] Petitioning wage slaves in Riverton on the Fourth of July 1893, Populist, Illinois Miners' Union president, and future UMW executive board member James A. Crawford preached farmer-miner alliance by demanding public ownership of factories, railroads, and communication networks, as well as land reform.[86] Other times, he used the concept of common bondage to sue for the elimination of the color line. At the Illinois Annual State Convention that year, Crawford, himself a Scottish immigrant, complained of the persistence of "local wars" between miners owing to ethnic, religious, and racial cleavages. Calling racial exclusion and inequality a "fossilized remnant"

that should have been "properly buried" by the Rebellion, he reiterated that race prejudice worked "wholly in the interests of operators and managers, who use such miserly unfair means to divide the ranks of the miners." Any rupture between white, Black, and immigrant, Crawford maintained, would surely result in the "enslavement" of all parties.[87]

That "slavery" bound miners in the borderland to a growing class of industrial workers in the region—and beyond it. At its most radical, the *Journal* informed its readers about the tenets of international socialism and the "need of world-wide organization" in the face of a rising global aristocracy of capital. The newspaper gave positive coverage to socialist parties, theories of "common property," and the Second International, including its attempts to form an International Bureau of Labor Correspondence that would encompass UMW leadership.[88] In particular, socialist miners warned that restricting certain workers from labor's ranks, whether by race, national status, or designating them "unskilled," would create a mass of non-union employed who would prove a powerful weapon to owners. They maintained that technology—the speed of telegraph and rail—had suddenly made possible worker coordination across continental boundaries, and global markets meant that U.S. workers must respond to strike actions in Australia, Belgium, or Northumberland. The solution to worker fragmentation, socialists argued, was to accentuate workers' most basic common denominator (class) and "concentrate forces" on the largest scale possible (internationally). As one advocate explained, because "money has no nationality" and "knows no frontiers," labor must, therefore, "take up the pattern of its enemies."[89] "Capitalism is international," the *Journal* proclaimed, "labor must learn to be just as broad."[90]

That "learning" led socialist miners to question the very notion of state borders—"invisible lines, marking one state from another"—with an understanding that genuine socialism would naturally lead to "a modification of the international laws affecting frontiers." Contradictorily, some miners saw a new global bilateralism between nations as an optimal way for the United States to limit "pauper" immigration, with restriction presumably enforced by cooperative worker governments abroad.[91] Others, however, avowed that because all wage workers were slaves, they could only be emancipated by dissolving non-class distinctions—including nationalism—through worldwide labor organization. In this sense, socialist miners challenged free white labor not only by defying its racial assumptions but also by questioning the notion that "free labor" was congruent with—or that union workers could best be protected by—the existence of state-imposed political borders.

AT A MORE LOCAL LEVEL, union media platformed African American correspondents who used the *Journal*'s widening reach to communicate various perspectives on the relation between race, class, region, and borders. Most prominent among these was Richard L. Davis of Rendville, Ohio, who became the union's highest-ranking Black official, serving on the national executive board during the 1890s. In dozens of letters written for the *National Labor Tribune* and the *United Mine Workers Journal*, Davis attempted to strike a balance between emphasizing class-based unity and pursuing racial justice, sometimes urging miners to subordinate race in the pursuit of class aims—to "forget whether we are white or colored"—while also promoting racial equality as essential to labor's struggle.[92]

In his influential 1968 essay, "The Negro and the United Mine Workers," Herbert Gutman skillfully details how Davis preached "the gospel of trade unionism" to Black miners; railed against racism within the rank and file; chastised the establishment of "colored mines" and the segregation of African American miners to (generally less safe) worksites; denounced owners who aroused worker division through racially exclusive hiring; established and guided new locals; counseled strikers during industrial disputes; and pushed for greater representation for Blacks in leadership positions, in part to dispel the idea that the UMW was just another "white man's union."[93]

As Gutman illustrates, Davis knew that worker-on-worker racism would die hard. It had only been thirty years since emancipation, he reminded white readers, when freedpeople were expected to integrate forthwith into a capitalist economy not only as secondary citizens subject to racial discrimination but also "without a dollar or an acre of land." Given the absence of federally backed land redistribution after the war, or the broken promise of "40 acres and a mule," every step of progress made by the Black wage worker seemed to further confirm him as "a great competitor with American white labor." It was at this point, according to Davis, that the UMW "did that which no other organization had done . . . threw open their doors and admitted him as a full member with the same rights and privileges as his white brother." In promoting racial integration, he maintained that the union had made "the initiative step toward the equality of mankind." Davis further argued that labor organizations, more than political parties or the church, were "the only ones that recognize the Negro as an equal and as a man" and had done "more toward the placing of all men upon an equal standing without regard to race, creed, color or sex than all other [social institutions] combined." Labor's final task would only be achieved, Davis concluded, when it had "wiped out all class and race distinctions."[94]

Still, Davis shared white miners' fears of "cheap" replacement labor, white or Black. Reporting on the danger of "scab" workers, he expressed reservations about the "importation" of "Huns, Slavs and Italians" and other immigrant groups who tended to be "classed with the whites."[95] Davis also commented on Black workers "filling the places of white miners" and how "the ignorant negro" had been "fooled away from their homes" by duplicitous labor agents who created want ads for waiters and coachmen in the North only to lead their "poor deluded" recruits into fierce and protracted labor conflicts.[96] Calling on working-class African Americans to ignore the advice of Black elites and the benevolence of white "money kings," Davis deemed those who would "run from place to place to break down wages" as "misguided, ill-informed pawns of capital."[97]

At the same time, Davis also acknowledged the travesty of racializing strikebreakers and objected to coding them as "negro." As a torchbearer for the organizability of Black miners, whose poverty and second-class status he believed made them perhaps more predisposed to unionization than native-born whites, he, like most white leadership, saw African Americans' willingness to cross the picket line as a matter of circumstance, not innate culture or biology.[98] Responding to events in Pana, Illinois, where white unionists infamously attacked Black strikebreakers in 1898, Davis thought it a grave mistake to either "organize against the black man" or enact racial apartheid or extermination, as some unionists were inclined to do. Castigating the *Journal* for trafficking in racial panic by alluding to "big black buck niggers," he explained that he had "more respect for the scab" than for union miners who advocated racial supremacy or separation.[99] To that end, and appealing to the self-interest of both groups, Davis simultaneously encouraged Black strikebreakers to read labor literature and unionize and pleaded with white unionists to elect Black miners into positions of leadership and "mix up our mines and work together as men."[100]

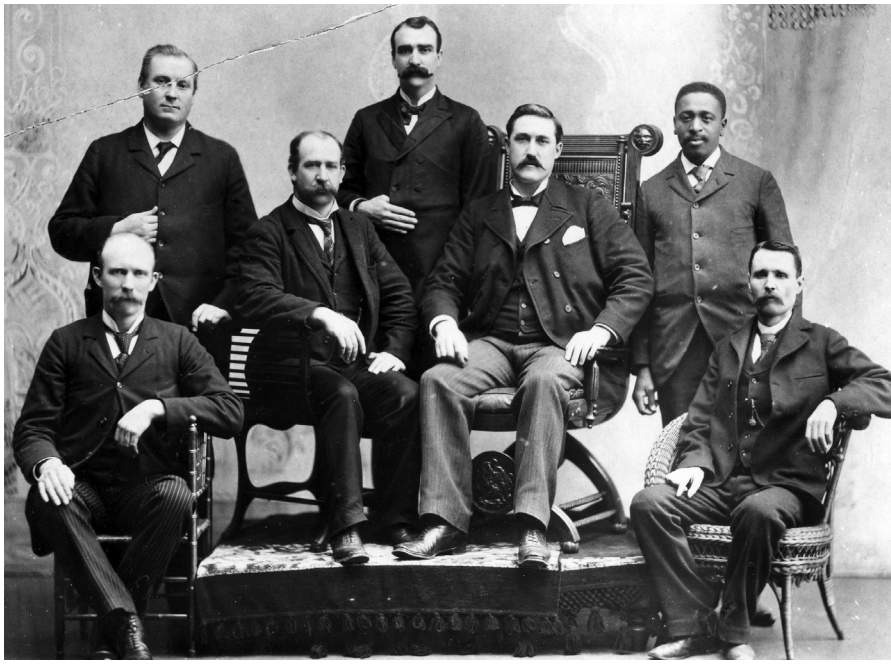
Davis's capacity to "inhabit two worlds," as Gutman put it, and his methodical limbo between race and class illuminates the fact that strikebreaking "*was* a racial issue," as historian Eric Arnesen asserts, "but it was also a particular kind of *class* or *labor* issue as well." According to Arnesen, Black proponents of conciliation with owners "consistently failed to understand that for many black workers, not all workplace issues were primarily racial issues; that is, everything in the labor market could not be reduced to race. Like whites, black workers objected to low wages, intolerable working conditions, abusive managers, and workplace humiliation, some of it racial, much of it not." Put

another way, the perspectives and direct interests of Black elites and Black workers differed, and although the strikebreaking strategy—encouraged by a range of African American "race leaders" in politics, business, and the church—rightly acknowledged that Black wage earners were discriminated against *as Black people*, it generally downplayed the extent to which Black laborers were also exploited *as workers*.[101]

Davis was, in a sense, fighting a three-front war: one against capitalists, above all, but also against racist union "brothers" and non-union immigrants and fellow African Americans. "Slavery," therefore, seemed a fitting common ground between these disparate workers. Indeed, the writings of Davis and other Black unionists suggest that the "slavery of wages" was, in the context of interracial industrial unionism, a far more unifying concept than an exaggerated metaphor in the service of white preference. Davis combined Christian precepts with appeals to collective "manhood" to highlight the unfinished nature of the Civil War or the notion that the abolition of chattel slavery was necessary but insufficient toward the liberation of working people. In 1891, he argued that Emancipation Day should be one for "all slaves, black and white alike," to reflect on "the system of slavery that we are now living under: wage slavery."[102] "We boast of this being the home of the brave and the land of the free," he attested in another essay, but in truth, it had become "the land of the rich and the home of the slave." True emancipation required "cast[ing] aside petty prejudices" in the name of broad class unity.[103]

Countless Black miners believed in the promise of interracial unionism in the borderland, as Gutman's profile of Davis contends. Perhaps it is less obvious that Black unionists were also keenly aware of labor competition related to borders. In addition to "tyrannical bosses" and the "encroachments of capital," they warned of threats from two groups of fellow workers: non-union Blacks, mostly imported from the South, and immigrants.[104] Davis, a migrant from Virginia to southeast Ohio, understood the practical realities of the labor market and alluded to the potential of political borders to become racialized labor peripheries. He insisted, for instance, that non-unionized West Virginia was a "land of bondage" owing to both "boss terrorism" and the color line, as the lack of worker power south of the Ohio River led unionized Ohio miners to resist northward interstate migration.[105] Although there was "little justice for the Black man anywhere," Davis observed, there was "none at all . . . south of Mason and Dixon's line."[106] (See Figure 7, page 300.)

The *Journal* also platformed Black workers who denounced the evils of convict leasing and other non-union labor. One such letter from an anony-



COURTESY RONALD L. LEWIS

Figure 7. UMW National Executive Board, 1897. Richard L. Davis is standing top right.

mous "Colored Union Miner" incarcerated in Williamson County, Illinois, for his role in worker-on-worker violence in Carterville detailed the pathetic state of replacement workers from Tennessee as a disorderly scene of ex-convicts along with their "criminal wives" and "barefoot children." The prisoner placed chief blame on owners, notably the hated Samuel Brush, but he also employed class and race stereotypes, likening stopgap workers to "monkeys" and emphasizing that they were not "the better class of the Southern Afro-American." Moreover, his description of "the dumping of unwelcome people into Illinois" echoed timeworn appeals for the protection of free labor, now qualified as "union" rather than "white."

Yet this expression of union over racial identity and the lengths to which Black union men often strove to separate themselves from non-unionists—presenting poor African Americans from the South as objects of pity and, at times, spite—revealed the double consciousnesses of Black unionists and the multiple fronts on which they were forced to contend. African American workers remained, in the words of one Black union man, "pitted against [both] money and prejudice."[107]

Union media nevertheless highlighted local incidents of racial discrimi-

nation. For example, miner George F. Williams used the *Journal* to pressure district and local officials to blacklist those who endorsed or practiced racial exclusion. Claiming that white unionists in Odin, Illinois, were barring African American workers simply on account of their race, Williams condemned the local as "a poor union where they run their brothers out just because their face is black." Situated in central southern Illinois, Odin was surrounded by numerous larger towns with strong oral traditions of both de facto and de jure racial restriction, and these legacies of racial restriction accentuated the need to distinguish all the more clearly between anti-Black and anti-union sentiment. As Williams suggested, being a true "union man" meant actively opposing both racial intolerance and "scabs" even (but not especially) when the strikebreakers were Black.[108]

Pressured by Davis and others, white miners became increasingly aware of the narrow horizons and diminishing returns wrought by exclusion. While the consequences of restriction in "unskilled" trades grew more obvious, union miners remained divided over the "the Negro question" and how (or if) to address race in relation to class. White union leaders regularly acknowledged racial discrimination, to be sure. But that recognition was not necessarily commensurate to building active connections with African American workers or appreciating capitalism's racial dimensions. Moreover, the UMW's ostensibly nonpartisan and non-electoral stance belied any understanding of African Americans' historic loyalty to the Republican Party or their antagonistic relationship with southern Democrats. For these reasons and more, white unionists tended to resist any politics of racial particularism. But that did not stop Black activists from demanding it.

LAURENE GARDNER VIEWED RACE-SPECIFIC policies not as justice but as disunity. Born and raised in the southern Illinois-western Kentucky marchland, Gardner lived in Linton, Indiana, editorializing as "a miner's wife" during the early 1890s. Emphasizing absolute class consonance during a delicate moment in the union's struggle to take flight, Gardner encouraged interracial membership and defended Black unionists as "good citizens" in the face of popular racism.[109] However, she viewed the amplification of "race issues" as having the potential to dissolve the union's fragile coalition. This approach sometimes involved denying the gravity of racial oppression even as the nation—from increased lynching and the eradication of biracial Populism to the *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling, which upheld the constitutionality of racial

segregation—turned sharply toward Jim Crow. Charging the *Journal*'s Black editorialists with presenting a "gloomy view" of race relations, Gardner used statistical indictors such as taxable wealth and numbers of schoolteachers and newspapers to proclaim that, rather than backsliding, African Americans had made unprecedented economic strides since the end of slavery. Insistence to the contrary, she believed, threatened to undermine "united labor."[110]

Gardner condemned exclusion and Black strikebreaking with equal fervor, albeit sometimes without a clear sense of Black agency or a precise articulation of how the existence of the former had rendered the latter inevitable. She explained: "In some places the color line is drawn so closely that a man has no chance to get work if he is black. In others it is said the colored men show themselves willing tools of the operators . . . both of these conditions are wrong." The only remedy to the first problem was a "spirit of universal justice that ensures all toilers fair treatment and equal rights," she argued. For this Gardner urged persuasion, though of a somewhat paternal nature, as she encouraged unionists to "make [Black strikebreakers] your friends" and "meet them in the spirit of fairness; teach them the principles of unionism and show them where these principles can be used for their own advantage as well as yours." Making no distinction based on race, she claimed to have "known as good union men as ever trod the floor of the assembly room who were as black as midnight and were proud of their honest color." Whereas Gardner understood the paramountcy of interracial organization and viewed Black miners as "peaceable and industrious," she also held no special place for the political concerns of African Americans beyond equality in the workplace.[111] In both personal and practical terms, Gardner reflected the prevailing union position of inclusion with little to no accounting for the racialized qualities of capitalism.

The memory of the Rebellion loomed large in Gardner's analysis, for instance, but she employed it differently than her Black compatriots. Although Gardner regularly invoked the notion of a second emancipation—how "freedom for the black slave" should now occasion "freedom for the wage slave"—she also recalled the Civil War less as a liberating event than a fratricidal testament to potential social fragmentation.[112] Neglecting the partisan dynamics of Reconstruction, which still pervaded Black political culture, or the ongoing white supremacy of Bourbon Democrats in the South, Gardner criticized supposed African American loyalty to the Republican Party and opposed all forms of Black political or organizational separation, believing they would sow division and backlash. Echoing the increasingly dominant culture of North-

South reconciliation that swept the nation during the 1890s, she declared, "No side issue, race creed, sectionalism or anything else should divert attention from the common doom of slavery that is hanging over us all."[113]

Black miners pushed back against Gardner's class-only (rather than class-first) approach to organizing and the notion that race was a "side issue." W. E. Clark of Rendville, Ohio, suggested that his perspective was different from that of white miners despite their comparable occupational and class positions, as he was subject to forms of violence, including lynching and torture, simply on account of his race. Writing on "the Afro American as a factor in the labor problem," Clark explained that while slavery's destruction "through the pen of Lincoln and Greeley and Sumner, and the sword of Grant and Hancock and Sherman" had made it possible for wage workers to also "snap the chains of industrial slavery," Black people were the most violently exploited. As such, their climb "out of the depths of slavery" would be steeper and more demanding, and the impediments they faced more acute.[114]

Clark also saw African American workers as uniquely ostracized from the political system and demanded that party platforms uphold non-discrimination and the protection of Black rights. If Democrats and even "the best so-called Republicans" were unwilling to meet that threshold, he proposed that Black citizens (not merely Black workers) form their own party.[115] Although sympathetic to some of Clark's points, Gardner countered that any party or union organized by race was certain to "foster race prejudice and sectionalism."[116]

Attempts to transcend the class-exclusive formula also reinforced racist ideas. Predictably, efforts to inject racial analysis sometimes devolved into physiognomy and race science regarding "negro noses" and "African" bodies, espoused under the authority of medical erudition.[117] Racist concepts also materialized in the words of African American miners writing for largely white audiences. For example, Clark expressed fellowship with Black and non-union "brethren" working in sugar, iron, cotton, and rice production in the Deep South as part of a freedom thread extending from Ireland and Africa to the Americas, from Robert Emmet, Toussaint L'Ouverture, and John Brown to the United Miners. However, in ruminating on slavery's role in global history, he found it a point of "inspiration" for African Americans that the supposed "white" people of the ancient and medieval worlds had once been enslaved, too.

Commenting on remarkable Black advancement only one generation removed from bondage, Clark urged African American workers to continue

to "rise like the white laborer out of the depths in which slavery left him to stand by the side of his more favored brother." In illuminating white skin privilege and promoting interracialism, he nevertheless presented a biological and evolutionist rather than a socially constructed view of race—one common among white and Black elites of the era—in which African Americans needed to "rise in the scale of industry and intelligence."[118]

No Black union activist pushed back more forcefully against the isolation of race from class than Willing Hands, the pen name of a miner in Brazil, Indiana. Like Gardner, Hands was originally from the Upper South, and he also articulated the grievances of the voiceless masses during a period of widespread discontent among the UMW rank and file.[119] Also, like Gardner, he recognized the necessity of class unity and favored universalist programs, including free homesteads and the public ownership of natural resources.[120] To that end, Hands employed the concept of shared captivity as a working-class unifier that might bridge not only coal miners but wage workers across races, genders, ethnicities, regions, industries, and "skill" positions. Contending that the "thralldom of wage slavery" made coal plantations even more galling than those of cotton, Hands claimed that whereas Black people had been "freed from chattel slavery, the poor white man has been enslaved." He therefore urged confederation among "all wage slaves . . . regardless of the color of their flesh."[121] Chattel servitude was gone, Hands explained, but workers, Black and white, were now "manacled" together.

But common exploitation did not mean that the experiences of white and Black miners were identical. Race-neutral policy, therefore, was not enough. Although Willing Hands saw the destruction of the color line as a baseline for worker association, he believed the best way to build the union—to pursue both justice and numbers—was through statutes beyond mere non-discrimination. As a member on the margins, or what historian Dana Caldemeyer terms the "partial inclusion" of being outside the union's main body (much less its inner circle of decision-making leaders), Hands understood that certain oppressions were unique to or experienced more acutely by Black workers. In ways both direct and subtle, he reminded white readers that they would never be forced to migrate to a foreign land where they were a racial minority, enter an organization with few or no members of their own race, or live with the constant fear of being killed simply "for looking strange."[122] While acknowledging the existence of a "wage slavery" that afflicted workers across racial lines, Hands insisted that enslavement was also a matter of degree. He highlighted the unique horrors of lynching, segregation, and anti-Populist

violence in the South, attempting to persuade white workers that these issues were germane to the miners' struggle.[123]

Rather than a source of fracture, Hands saw industrial unionism and racial justice as mutually constituting. He had experienced racism in his home of Muhlenberg County, in western Kentucky, where attempts to unionize broke down over the color line. As Caldemeyer notes, the subtleties of Hands's language, including his use of "your union" to describe the UMW, demonstrate the distance he felt from white unionists.[124] Accordingly, Hands, himself a Knight of Labor, chided both the Order and the American Federation of Labor for participating in Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1892, which perpetuated dehumanizing racial stereotypes. He also denounced all-white unions such as the American Railway Union and rebuked white miners for defying local, state, and national non-discrimination bylaws. But he did not give up on them or the cause. Instead, Hands upheld strict enforcement of non-discrimination statutes, pleaded with white miners to better understand the plight of their Black comrades, and urged them to also buy and consult Black newspapers to gain a better perspective on the condition of African Americans.[125] Proclaiming that racism made Black workers all the more willing to break strikes out of a sense of spite, Hands appealed to the material self-interest of his largely white readership: "You can never get your union strong as long as you ignore the Afro-American as a coal producer against you."[126] Capitalists exploited race to divide and conquer, and white miners who used the presence of *some* African American strikebreakers to attack Black people as a whole, he warned, were walking into a trap.

Hands insisted that challenging owners and marginalizing the "ignorant and prejudiced class of whites" who upheld local segregation meant fully embracing the "color question."[127] He responded to Davis's description of how operators of the Congo Mine in Perry County, Ohio, drew a "very distinct line of demarcation" and housed non-union Black workers along what was known as "Nigger Ridge" by relating his own experiences with how segregation in southern workplaces proved disastrous for labor organization. Meanwhile, abuse directed by fellow miners was even more harmful than that by owners because it provided Black workers "an excuse to not join labor unions that will let them." Hands maintained that the natural result of fair treatment was greater worker confederation, and union growth bred its own type of open-minded culture. This union effect, he believed, was what made mining communities in the North distinct from those in the South, which drew a harder color line and where Black and white miners "went their separate

ways" in residential and social life.[128] Although Black citizens in Brazil were a decided minority, Hands alleged that they were "treated white by the whites" as "respectable families" of both races lived together in double houses and developed close friendships beyond the workplace.[129]

In short, Hands believed that membership gains through race-specific outreach would more than offset any absconsion by racist whites and that further unionization, in turn, was certain to breed racial liberalism. In defense of that position, he debated other correspondents, including African Americans, on the proper role of race within union strategy. For instance, Hands accused William P. Riley, the Black secretary-treasurer of District 19 in Tennessee, who was inclined to make distinctions between "negroes" and "niggers," of being overly harsh in his evaluation of miners of color. Such assessments included Riley's belief in the irredeemability of "ignorant negroes" and his association of strikebreaking with "niggerish, doggish principles."[130] Pointing out the double standard with which newspapers covered Black versus white strikebreaking, Hands asserted that name-calling would "never get [Black strikebreakers] on the right and to justice."[131] His position was essentially this: the union should always condemn scabbing and racism, but organizers should not essentialize or completely write off either Black strikebreakers or racist whites.

Hands's militancy certainly contained practical limitations and even kernels of conservative self-help ideology geared toward Black readers. For instance, although he acknowledged the structural barriers faced by African American unionists, Hands also suggested that it was their special duty to go beyond what would be reasonably expected of their white counterparts, first by joining the Knights and the UMW, in the face of added obstacles, then by fighting to make sure those organizations lived up to their principles of racial inclusion and equality—to "agitate, organize, and educate."[132] Like W. E. Clark, Hands underscored the importance of Black history to this endeavor. He regularly cited the Reconstruction Amendments as a legal basis for equality struggles and summoned race leaders including Frederick Douglass, Blanche K. Bruce, John Mercer Langston, and John R. Lynch to a largely white readership acculturated on heroic stories of white settlers and slavers.[133] (See Figure 8.)

When some miners pushed back against the *Journal*'s growing attention to race, and to against Hands in particular, the publishers held firm. Irish-born editor Patrick McBryde was one of the original authors of the UMW's non-discrimination constitution. As the organization's secretary-treasurer, he

COURTESY LITTLE CITIES OF BLACK DIAMONDS ARCHIVE

Figure 8. Rendville School, early 1900s. The racial and class composition confirm the point made by Richard L. Davis, Willing Hands, and other Black miners that union towns were uniquely capable of producing interracial working-class institutions and a greater measure of social equality.

had declared that "the color line must be eliminated."[134] Now, he reminded "an extremely limited number of [disgruntled] patrons" that the union newspaper was "established by the miners and for the miners, not by the white miners nor for the white miners." Defending the publication's "liberality," he felt that a "considerable portion" of the "labor question" was "imbedded deep down" with the problem of racial prejudice (as well as nativism and partisanship), which was clearly "a question of social and industrial import." As such, McBryde felt it necessary to not only "give free scope to our colored friends to air their grievances" but to repeat the union's racial philosophy ad nauseam as to fully permeate the consciousness of white miners—to, in effect, thrust racial liberalism, shunt-like, into the brains of the common worker.[135]

Through McBryde's editorship, the rank and file also encountered debates over the role of gender-specific policies. The *Journal* highlighted working women's varying experiences and perspectives, even as it emphasized gendered conceptions of virtue and domesticity. Whereas white unionists, men and women alike, largely resisted a more encompassing organizational approach toward race, a cadre of reformers sought to address gender oppression beyond the workplace. Labor journalist and Knights of Labor activist Eva McDonald-Valesh explained that one goal of unionization was to "give the world an object lesson on the equality of women." Framing women's rights as a

matter of self-interest for men, as it would supposedly encourage sobriety and morality, she believed the union had "affirmed this belief [in women's rights in civic life] in various platforms and perspectives." But McDonald-Valesh encouraged the organization to go further. In addition to discussing basic matters of work and wages, she urged men to promote women's interests and representation, affirm suffrage and civic rights "regardless of sex," and abolish "the unjust discrimination made against women in every walk of life." In other words, McDonald-Valesh felt the UMW should not merely be gender-neutral; it should be actively anti-sexist.[136]

The question of whether the union should address the multisided oppression faced by African American women was left largely unanswered by both white women and Black men. When the *Journal* did include the perspectives of Black women in mining communities, it was expressed through correspondents like Sinthy Snodgrass, "our colored sister," writing from Dugger, Indiana. Recounting the "dark slavery days" and presenting labor's cause as a continuation of wartime emancipation, she defended union labor and condemned ruthless mine operators.[137] Snodgrass, at times, composed editorials in Ebonics, perpetuating stereotypes concerning rural Black speech and eating patterns, as well as Black female maternalism. Through a sometimes exaggerated, if not intentionally comical, vernacular, she warned of the dangers of imported replacement labor by decrying "de trash . . . comin from obry country wid dere ignorance" and lamented how "some oh my people" were shipped at the behest of capitalists to take the place of union strikers, or "good ones men fitin for dere rites." Overall, Snodgrass represented rural African American caricature for the amusement of a largely white readership while also depicting Black women as critical union allies.[138]

Ultimately, Black activists in the borderland fought—through a sense of both righteous indignation and radical optimism—for race-specific measures because they, unlike whites, were fighting a four-front war. The first front was against owners, whom they fought not only as disadvantaged workers but as racially persecuted workers. Racism within the union ranks constituted a second front. The third was against the threat of non-union and replacement workers, including Black strikebreakers. And Black women such as Snodgrass also waged a fourth front against patriarchy and sex-based marginalization.

Deprived of high-profile newspaper columns, common African American miners sought to stem this manifold subjugation at the grassroots level. On June 18, 1899, for instance, a group of Black unionists met at a public cemetery in Danville, Illinois, to address the particularism of their condition.

They denounced owners who favored white over Black workers, demanded the right to be employed at the same proportion as white miners without bias from either employers or their white union "brothers," and urged the UMW to hire an arbitrator or "secret investigator in the field" to explore acts of discrimination in the ranks.

Recognizing that race prejudice ran counter to the breadth and well-being of the union as a whole, white district leadership and the *Journal* often promoted these organizing efforts but failed to adopt their requests for independent investigations.[139] The half-heartedness of this approach did not deter Black miners in Danville from believing that union officials were susceptible to public persuasion. Whether one accepts Herbert Gutman's contention that the UMW offered Black miners genuine hope for racial equality even as the color line fossilized across the nation or Herbert Hill's claim that the union provided Blacks "little more than membership," the very inclusion of Black voices such as Davis, Hands, and Snodgrass—of confirming and defending the political and social legitimacy of African American workers—constituted a forceful blow to the free white labor consensus.

IN THE SPRING OF 1899, the *Journal* printed "The Miners' Burden," a reimagining of Rudyard Kipling's recent but already famed poem. First published in the London *Times* less than two months before, Kipling's "The White Man's Burden" was designed to persuade anti-imperialists in the United States of the so-called moral benefits of colonialism by highlighting the duty of "white" nations to uplift the world's primitive people, non-Christian and incapable of self-government, and incorporate them into the civilized world. Imperialists, including Teddy Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge, used the poem to justify Philippine annexation. Warning against the coexistence of white and non-white races, arch-segregationist Ben Tillman even read the poem aloud on the Senate floor—evidence of its cultural relationship to Jim Crow.[140]

The "miners' burden," in contrast, was an affirmation of classed, not raced, obligation and struggle—against dictatorial owners, hostile courts, anti-worker attitudes, and the dangers of the mine itself. In gendered terms, it framed interracial unionism, not white empire, as a necessary responsibility on the path to full manhood and human dignity. As a call to federation, and the workingmen's transition "from bondage to association," "The Miners' Burden" proved a fitting symbol for the tremendous change that union miners had inaugurated across the borderland—one that framed class and union

status, rather than race and ethnicity, as the unmistakable basis for social and group inclusion.[141]

For their time and place, the United Miners' basic principles were indeed transformational, even radical. As the first large-scale and permanent interracial working-class institution in a region previously defined by exclusion, the union promoted institutional equality, contested ethnic stereotypes, and debated the "negro question" from a liberal perspective. On some level, union literature even introduced readers to Black and people's history and popularized internationalism and ecosocialism. Its conventions, moreover, endorsed municipal ownership and public distribution of light, power, and heat; the nationalization of railroads, mines, and communication networks; and the collective ownership by the people of all means of production and distribution. Far from paper radicalism, these guiding philosophies bred stunning success. The region's miners, formerly willing to sacrifice the larger class project for the immediate tangible benefits of racial privilege, slowly abandoned a "whites only" position as owners brought to bear every trick—depleting private fortunes, maximizing public influence, and exploiting every last angle of racialized border hysteria—to slow the union's advance.

By the final year of the nineteenth century, the UMW boasted more than ninety thousand members, twenty thousand of whom were Black, and the borderland's mines were the most union-dense in the nation.[142] Even in the historic core of African American exclusion, the efficacy of interracial union brotherhood was clearer. As Black miner O. H. Norwood explained, the UMW had "done more to erase the word *white* from the Constitution than the Fourteenth Amendment."[143]

Yet non-discrimination—embodied by Debs's "wage slave" universalism—albeit necessary, proved insufficient. The leadership pivot from McBride to Ratchford—away from both labor populism and, by 1895, the public ownership of mines and toward greater cooperation with owners and Republican politicians—curbed the union's radicalism, including on matters of race, typified by Richard Davis's removal from the executive board in 1898. Though early union efforts promoted integration as a matter of fairness and self-preservation, they stopped short of framing broader racial equality as in their best interests or those of the union or outlining the war on Black workers beyond their communities as a direct threat to workers everywhere. On the ground, it was far more commonly the case that white unionists abided interracialism out of some combination of morality and economic self-protection without recognizing—because the union failed to address—specific forms of oppres-

sion within or in addition to class oppression, thereby conferring informal advantage on white workers.

"Race neutral" policy, in other words, did not necessarily translate into the practical tools needed for large-scale interracial organizing. In rendering extra-class variation extraneous and transforming the diversity of miner workers into "The Worker," "colorblindness"—and the fear that any gesture toward racial particularism would threaten the movement's consensus—proved functionally limited in a society in which race played such a paramount role in shaping everything from economic supersystems to people's interior lives. For all of the egalitarian impulses of individual unionists, the UMW as an organization too often neglected to account for African Americans as a uniquely or even dissimilarly oppressed segment of the working class.

This flattening of intraclass difference with regard to race, gender, and ethnicity engendered broad unity within one industry. But the union's conservative turn in the late 1890s, along with its failure to formally acknowledge the racialized nature of capitalist development in the United States, produced a self-imposed ceiling and inhibited a more fully consolidated class movement. As political economists Abram L. Harris and Sterling Spero contend, the early UMW suffered from the "inability or unwillingness to draw any distinctions between the absence of racial discrimination in constitutional principle and the appearance of it in everyday fact."[144] The result was a union that formally condemned race prejudice (within the organization) even as it possessed few non-white leaders and failed to systematically address, much less directly attack, structures of racial oppression that directly constrained the fundamental rights of African American workers and their capacity to organize. Despite sincere efforts to undertake a cultural shift toward (something approximating) anti-racism, the union's commitment to paper law—to liberalism, in effect—was the single most important internal factor in rendering it vulnerable on the margins, susceptible to both reactionary attack and leftist insurgency.

As a result, the maturing union soon found itself assaulted by both old and familiar class enemies on the political right, including white-collar conservatives to whom union bureaucrats increasingly accommodated, and by the grassroots political left, which accused the organization of not taking committed stands for gender inclusion, nor enacting internal democratic reforms against anti-Black violence and Jim Crow. In failing to adopt a stronger justice orientation while converging with business unionism, the UMW left itself open to critique from below, by Black workers who recognized sys-

temic inequalities and the persistence of "white slavery" attitudes, and above, by elites who had a vested interest in delegitimizing organized labor by portraying worker-on-worker violence as simple and brutish "race war." As this new and more complex terrain of struggle unfolded in the first decades of the twentieth century, it became clear that the prospect of a capacious working-class movement—and a glint of interracial economic democracy in the historically divided borderland—hung in the balance.

PART VI

Race Wars

William A. Boyce was a hero of his race—and a traitor to his union. Expelled from the United Mine Workers of America for supporting a movement to "Save the Union" from a supposedly corrupt and conservative bureaucracy, Boyce rose to the national vice presidency of a newly formed breakaway faction.[1] That faction, the National Miners Union, was affiliated with the fledgling Communist Party, whose slogan, "Workers and oppressed peoples of all countries, unite!," communicated the party's contention, formulated at the 1922 Comintern Congress, that Black workers would play a critical role in both their own economic emancipation and the overthrow of capitalism.[2] It was within this ideological vein that Boyce proved a racial and labor pioneer, becoming the first Black man to publicly speak on politics in various parts of the borderland, including Knox County, in his home state of Indiana.[3] Although the upstart National Miners acknowledged that the UMW possessed "the greatest tradition of militancy and heroism in American labor history," it was because of that fact, not despite it, that members sought to build on its radical legacies.[4]

As the first African American in U.S. history to serve as vice chair of a racially integrated worker federation, Boyce proved integral to that plan, and he promoted the red union as a shield against all forms of racial prejudice, segregation, and disenfranchisement. In the spring of 1928, Boyce had brought the founding convention in Pittsburgh to its feet with what observers cheered as a "rousing appeal to racial solidarity." Rather than demonize Black strikebreakers, Boyce sympathized with them as potential—even essential—comrades. "I can't blame my colored brothers who go scabbing," Boyce confessed

to the largely white audience of fellow delegates. "I know how they are treated and I know how I am treated. When we all go down in the mines together you can't tell who's white and who's black. Even the boss turns black."[5]

Boyce's goal, however, was not metaphorical colorblindness but racial justice through class struggle unionism. And by the time he provided the keynote address at the district meeting in Knox County in late summer 1929, he had spent months strategizing around the idea that Black laborers were, in the words of one comrade, "the most exploited section of the American working class," part of the wider subjugation and robbery of people not defined as "white." Espoused by Trinidadian journalist George Padmore, who situated Boyce and the NMU within a global anticolonial framework, such theory held that the struggle against capitalism in the borderland was directly related to the fight against British occupation in India, French imperialism in Morocco, and U.S. military intervention in Haiti and Puerto Rico.[6]

Perhaps fittingly, it was in southern Indiana, with its settler-colonial romanticism and one of the nation's hubs of racial prohibition, that Boyce declared it his intent to win Black miners into the new union, then to make it a "bulwark of defense" against any semblance of racial inequality. Even though the UMW constitution prohibited discrimination based on race, he avowed that such statements were "not worth the paper they were printed on," as unofficial prejudice remained rampant. A corrective to the UMW non-discrimination would involve not only Black members but would advocate for "full economic, political, and social equality" in and beyond the union.[7]

The Indiana meeting in which Boyce delivered this vision was held in Bicknell, a mining town of narrow streets and boxlike houses that boasted a long history of left-wing politics. The socialist *Appeal to Reason* had once praised the community for demonstrating to "the rest of the country that workers have the power and the intelligence to be their own political and industrial masters."[8] Although the Socialist Party of Debs had declined, by 1928, Bicknell boasted the largest NMU local in the state, and its invited speakers condemned the UMW for its unresponsive bureaucracy and top-down accommodationism. In addition to William and Ora Boyce, who represented the Ladies Auxiliaries of the NMU, the forum featured several African American delegates. Whereas Ora Boyce spoke on the importance of women's work and through a socialist feminist lens, her husband described the "economics of race war," or how racism advanced owner interests at the expense of workers. "The Negro miners, persecuted both as a race and as a class, are desirous of organization," Boyce maintained, "but because of the race prejudice systemat-

ically fostered by the employers and gullibly absorbed by many workers, they are being driven from the side of the workers and into the camp of the enemy."

The gathering was all the more remarkable because Bicknell was, on the face of it, a sundown town. According to Communist observers, the borough had no history of interracial activism, and its census rolls revealed a Black population of zero. Oral tradition supported the idea that Black people were unwelcome, and various press outlets reported that roads leading into the town displayed signs that read, "Niggers, this is Bicknell, keep on traveling!"[9] For Communists, who adopted the slogan "let the miners run the mines," there was intentional symbolism in challenging the community's deep-seated social conventions, and the *Daily Worker* explained that Bicknell's fraught racial past made the miners' gathering one of "the greatest significance." As one editor made clear, "For years Bicknell has been noted for its anti-Negro attitude, fostered by the Ku Klux Klan and the coal companies." Now the NMU was determined to "wipe out" such sentiment by taking "organizational steps to challenge the discrimination against Negroes."[10]

To that end, Boyce negotiated one firing line after another. Hosting a district convention in Belleville's Liederkranz Hall in late October, he looked to stage a coup against coal companies and their "leech-like" allies within the UMW. In addition to racial equality, the NMU advocated a six-hour day, a five-day week, unemployment insurance, and miner control of conveyors and other machines. More broadly, the upstart union hoped to break up the district system, combine bituminous and anthracite miners, then coal miners with metal miners and beyond.[11] By December, Boyce and his wife, Ora, were putting demands into action in Pana, Illinois, where NMU miners were walking off the job. Now serving as acting NMU president, Boyce delivered a speech to eight hundred diggers in Kitchell Park, on the south side of town. He reiterated the strike demands formulated at the Belleville convention, with special attention to injustices faced by young, foreign-born, and Black miners, as well as the role of women, which Ora addressed. It was an unlikely scene and a breathtaking testament to the valence of class partnership—a Black man and his Black wife, both Communists, giving a public speech in support of white coal miners in a town that had gone sundown a generation earlier in response to an influx of Black strikebreakers.[12]

Speaking in his hometown of Clinton one month later, Boyce looked to distinguish the NMU from the UMW, particularly on the issue of race. "I want the rank-and-file to know what kind of organization we are building; we are building a class-conscious union, regardless of creed, color, nationality,

and on a class struggle basis." So as not to conflate United Miner liberalism with National Miner radicalism, Boyce then went further. "We call upon all Negro miners throughout the country to join the National Miners Union . . . not only to be members and dues payers, but to come into full participation of leadership" and establish a project based on true interracial principles. "There are approximately 60 percent Negro coal miners in the Southern coal fields," Boyce proclaimed, and they had been "driven there by discrimination practiced in the old United Mine Workers of America." The only solution to the production of "scab coal," he argued, was full-throated justice, as both a moral imperative and strategic necessity. Simply put, the NMU would correct what the UMW had gotten wrong. They would abandon any pretense of race neutralism in favor of aggressive antiracism—and they would do it in the historic heartland of Black exclusion.[13]

The treatment Boyce received from local white populations testified to the urgency of his message. When two Belleville restaurants refused to serve him, white NMU miners blackballed the establishments, vowing to "enforce union boycotts wherever manifestations of Jim Crowism are seen." It was not enough to declare equality on paper, Boyce reminded his comrades following the incident, as opposition to racial discrimination must instead be continuously "put into effect." He alleged that the best way to build and maintain working-class power was to solidarize in overturning a deeply entrenched culture of racial separation. White miners had to win the trust of their Black comrades, which required the latter to actively and consistently fight on behalf of the former precisely because it was in their best interests to do so.[14] It also meant disposing of racist ideas that associated Blackness with workplace subordination and sabotage. As such, Boyce was adamant that working-class African Americans were neither "habitual scabs" nor manipulated dupes. Rather, deprivation and discrimination compelled them toward strikebreaking, which Black miners further legitimized through the understandable "resentment" they felt toward elevated and exclusionary white workers.[15]

In August 1929, Boyce was elected vice chairman of the Cleveland convention, which established the Trade Union Unity League. An affiliate of the Red International of Labor Unions, the TUUL attempted to forge "a new trade union center" (dual unionism) through the unprecedented organization of "unskilled" and non-white workers—the most marginalized members of the U.S. working class—thus providing U.S. trade unionism with a "proletarian character" distinct from the "business character" of the American Federation of Labor.[16] Writing in the *Daily Worker*, Padmore cited the AFL's neglect of

Black workers as the single most urgent reason for the creation of the TUUL. He insisted that African American wage earners were "not only exposed to the exploitation of bosses" but also "the targets of the most vicious attacks of race prejudice which assumes the form of police coercion, lynching, Jim-Crowism, segregation, disfranchisement and peonage." The Trinidadian Marxist maintained that the AFL's "declarations of non-discrimination" were merely cover for its systematic indifference toward the discrete oppressions faced by Black miners. In contrast, with leaders like Boyce at the helm, the TUUL would prove "the champion of negroes" through full integration, equal pay and officeholding, commitments to race-specific issues, and a social unionist approach to racism—a "merciless fight against white chauvinism."[17]

The United Miners had defied a century of exclusionary laws and customs by orienting an ideal of community that was centered not on race but on class status and trade. In many ways, that achievement was remarkable. However, two kinds of "race wars" now threatened to undermine that tenuous vision. The first was an assault from the left—by Black workers as well as white Communists and progressives—whose backers recognized that paper non-discrimination within one institution in a white supremacist society was, in practice, not synonymous with racial equality. Indeed, the wider political struggle pursued by revolutionary socialists, Black and white—one beyond the workplace, toward internationalism and human rights—constituted the fiercest and most unflagging resistance to white supremacy during the Second Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s, far more than established trade unions, including the UMW.[18] The second assault came from the right, from elites who portrayed all worker-on-worker violence as rooted above all in either cultural deficiency or racist timelessness rather than production, exploitation, labor market hierarchies, and capitalist inequality. In doing so, they constructed a myth of random and self-aggrandizing working-class violence.

The reality was more complex. Although the specter of "race war" had weighed heavy on the brains of antebellum white southerners, and northerners had long used the phrase to depict anti-Black terror in Dixie, only in the 1880s did it become a common euphemism to describe violence against Black strikebreakers. In an oblique denial of class difference and schism, newspaper headlines in New York, Chicago, and Washington, D.C., began to regularly broadcast "race war" as an obfuscatory catchall for conflict between union miners and Black strikebreakers.[19] Adding to this confusion, southern boosters highlighted labor-related anti-Black brutality in the Midwest to dissuade southern Blacks from migrating northward. As one white Alabama editor

saw it, white-on-Black bloodshed in Little Egypt was a result of being "at the southern end of the vast Illinois coal fields" and its proximity to Kentucky, the source of "numerous negroes" and potential economic competitors. The scale of racial expulsion in the region, he argued, offered proof that "the southern counties of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio" were less hospitable than the South, which remained "the best home for the negro."[20]

Anti-Black group violence in borderland was, of course, tragically commonplace. The region experienced three of the largest "race riots" in U.S. history during the first decades of the twentieth century: Evansville in 1903, Springfield in 1908, and East St. Louis in 1917. The popular association of "white" with "worker" endured, as white borderlanders responded to African American migration with cries of "white slavery"—a reimagining of the old "free white labor" idea. White unionists remained especially vulnerable to such appeals during downturns in structural power (unfavorable changes in the labor market) and periods of declining enrollment. Day-to-day discrimination, exacerbated by percolating border fears and altercations against strikebreakers, smudged the line between class and racial conflict. Fragmentation and brutal suppression by owners and state authorities drove workingmen to look for internal scapegoats, which sometimes took on racial and ethnic dimensions as unionists gave rabid expression to broader cultures of racial difference, often going beyond the acceptable dictates of bourgeois white supremacy. Moreover, powerful narrative creators beyond the mining regions trafficked in stereotypes that ranged from paternalistic to dehumanizing, leading miners to assume a resistive posture, as community protection manifested through defenses of union, but also race. Unionists and their families, white and Black, absorbed the oppression long directed at them and occasionally unleashed it against those they saw as threatening their livelihoods and, indeed, their racial identities.

Boyce and the Communists were clear-eyed about these institutional and cultural hindrances to racially equal unionism in the borderland. The proliferation of their ideas reflected the party's increased commitment to antiracist theory, despite its authoritarian structure and exasperating changes in party line, as it addressed "race prejudice" as the most acute internal hindrance to any revolutionary workers' movement. Even so, party leaders recognized that countless conflicts—in both domestic labor and anticolonial contexts—which the press described as "race wars" were in fact either partly or primarily class wars.[21] Rather than one-dimensional instances of racial hatred or ethnic cleansing, many were confrontations between union workers who

were largely (but not entirely) white and non-union strikebreakers who were sometimes (but not always or even predominantly) Black.

As the *Daily Worker* declared, "Capitalists love the sight of the white worker competing with the black worker for a job," and "race wars"—real or imagined—were the logical conclusion of this insidious strategy. To that end, the party presented racialized labor conflict as part of a concerted, if not conspiratorial, attempt by owners to divide white workers from "more oppressed" Black workers and incite violence between them—an "old trick" on the part of employers to disguise wage cuts and break unions.[22]

This insistence on the material roots of racial violence became central to the Communist Party's anti-racist commitment beginning with its Fourth Congress in 1922. There the Comintern, influenced and aided by Black Communists, compelled the Workers Party of America to foreground the "Negro question," which Bolshevik leadership viewed as both a critical part of the colonial question and essential to winning based on specific historical developments in the United States (slavery and its legacies of racism and apartheid).[23] The party's racial justice convictions became so pronounced and so theoretically sophisticated relative to other white leftists that when American Communists finally broke out of their provincial New York base, moving into the industrial Midwest, and espoused a policy of "Self-Determination in the Black Belt," critics across the political spectrum held them responsible for the "race wars" they were certain would follow.[24]

However, the Communists had done more than advance a coherent framework for understanding the construction and function of race—one built on a foundation of Black socialism. They had also exposed shortcomings in AFL organizing, including gaping holes in the sectors of mass production and, especially, the agricultural South, that revealed the limitations of "non-discrimination" within a racially unequal society. Although their bold strategic strokes would ultimately lay bare the depths of racial division and top-down reaction in the region, as well as structural weaknesses within the CP, Boyce and other Communists viewed interracial militancy not as an impediment toward practical goals but as a revolutionary opportunity. With necessary optimism of the will, they avowed that the power of race and borders to divide workers could best be negated through even greater incorporation, and by attacking racial injustice not merely within the union but wherever it lurked.

CHAPTER 11

The Economics of Race War

The language of "race war" pervaded the late nineteenth-century borderland. Sensationalized newspaper reporting and commentary from across the political spectrum used the phrase to describe everything from bar fights and nativist skirmishes to lynching, Ku Klux Klan terror, and labor bloodshed. As a description of racially motivated social violence, "race war" flattened social hierarchies by implying equal agency among white and Black participants. Subordinating political economy and obscuring material relations also contained a classed element, as assertions of "race war" often served to delegitimize worker activity. To cite one early example, when 2,500 Ohio coal miners, led by noted reformer and women's suffragist Richard Trevellick, marched against the "importation" of mostly Black strikebreakers in early 1873, the Republican *Chicago Tribune* described the scene as "a war of races."[1] Even if guilty of poor strategy, Trevellick and his followers, who included African American unionists, assuredly did not conceive of their position as anti-Black, much less promoting race war. As a labor organizer in the shipyards of antebellum New Orleans, Trevellick had seen the tragic consequences of labor's color line, prompting him to defy racial exclusionists and anti-Chinese hardliners within the National Labor Union.[2]

Although newspaper publishers used race war for partisan effect, the term served multiple functions, and the point at which labor conflict became racial violence was often unclear. The NLU's position regarding coercive "importation" vis-à-vis voluntary "immigration" revealed the sometimes murky distinction between opposing corporate hiring policies and general hostility toward non-white people. Indeed, anti-Black and anti-immigrant violence

was sometimes directly related to labor actions, as unionists, largely or exclusively white, walked off the job, and management hired non-union workers, often Black or foreign-born, to break the strikes. In many cases, strikers responded to this pattern with persuasion and negotiation, imploring strikebreakers either to unionize and strike alongside them or leave peacefully. But in others, the white community as a whole simply expelled Black residents and banned future African American settlement, through ordinance, posted signage, or unwritten codes. In case after case, racial expulsions played out, frequently with the full participation of white unionists, for the ostensible protection of labor, sometimes qualified in racial terms.

The town of Linton, Indiana, which reportedly went sundown after local coal operators attempted to use Black strikebreakers, stands as one example of the complexity of "race war."[3] Miners there had gained a militant reputation following an 1891 walkout after proprietors violated UMW contracts and backlisted union activists.[4] When the Island Coal Company began hiring non-union southern Blacks in late 1893, replete with broken promises regarding pay and working conditions, miners responded initially by helping them organize as a UMW local. But as their numbers increased and the labor pool swelled, white and Black unionists and their families grew indignant and soon called a public meeting to raise money for the newcomers' peaceful deportation.[5]

Denouncing "the importation of an undesirable class of pauper labor," the citizens, which also included farmers and businessmen, feared that an influx of Black workers would depress wages and increase resource competition, as there was already "more white labor in Linton now than [can] find steady employment." There was also a worry, echoed by future UMW president Phil Penna, that non-union miners would attract additional "cheap" labor to the area. Other concerns were more overtly racial, such as how the new workers would impact schools and public "morality," as disgruntled citizens linked those issues to housing and taxation through familiar appeals to both race and property. Despite Island Coal president Alfred M. Ogle's assurances that the Black workers were to perform only menial labor at pay below the miners' rate, some eventually entered the mines and joined the union.[6] White union men were adamant that their sole aim was to block "scab" labor, not to forbid or expel Black people, but when some Black unionists began to leave in January, miners in nearby towns accused Linton's white miners of intimidating African Americans.[7]

Bloodshed finally erupted the following summer. A gang beat an African

American miner for his alleged insult to a white co-worker, spurring retaliation by a small number of local Blacks. Events then escalated rapidly, as the reported shooting became just cause for a mob of hundreds to attempt to "kill or hang every negro" in town. Expecting an attack, Linton's African Americans barricaded their neighborhood and returned fire on the rioters, who were eventually forced to retreat.[8] A "citizens' committee" soon drafted resolutions, quickly ratified by Island City Coal, which ceased employment of all Black workers for fear of further disorder, and Black residents fled the town en masse.[9]

In the years that followed, Linton garnered a reputation as a vicious sundown town, with white citizens intimidating companies that retained Black workers.[10] When a catering company owned by Alex Sanderson of Terre Haute attempted to use African American waiters at the opening of a new Elks lodge in July 1903, a mob of white miners purportedly threatened to dynamite the banquet before chasing the food service workers out of town. Events in Linton drove a dispirited Eugene Debs to remark, "When the Negro is idle and shiftless . . . he is denounced and hunted down and lynched. When he seeks to make an honest living, he is driven out by the mob." On the question of Black strikebreakers, he conceded, "When the miners have another strike, who can blame the Negroes if they take their place?"[11]

The crimes of Linton constituted a racial pogrom. But they were a labor war, too. Although it is unclear whether Black union miners were also forced to leave Linton, even the *Indianapolis Journal*, which had covered developments as a long-simmering labor conflict, now maintained that the "Greene County race war" was simply the result of white miners' hatred of Black people and their refusal to work alongside them.[12] The Republican *Journal* explained that anti-Black attitudes were strictly partisan and cultural in origin. Because Linton was heavily Democratic and had been a meeting place for Knights of the Golden Circle and Sons of Liberty during the Civil War, its citizens' committees were now controlled by "traitors" such as Andrew Humphreys, who had been a Peace Democrat in 1864, and other supposed Union Army deserters.[13] Despite their factual components, essentialist references to race war, consistently uttered not by egalitarians who were especially concerned with African American rights but by white politicians and editors who had a vested interest in party attacks and anti-unionism, served to obfuscate the role of owner power and worker exploitation. Put simply, race wars such as Linton's often stemmed from class injustice as well as anti-Blackness.

RACE WAR, AND THE WILLINGNESS of elites to strip social violence of its material components, subsisted atop a bedrock of worker dehumanization. A bituminous miners' strike in the spring of 1894 illustrates how the cultural construction of the "subhuman miner" served to discredit organized labor while reinforcing inequality and intraclass competition fears. Occurring during an economic depression and concurrent with Chicago's Pullman Strike, the wave of stoppages saw Illinois miners in Pana, Carterville, and Breese respond to the mobilization of private guards by arming themselves and camping outside the mines to avert strikebreakers. Some communities experienced confrontations between native and foreign-born union diggers and non-union Blacks. Unionists in Evansville, for example, clashed with non-union men, resulting in the deaths of two workers.[14] In May, miners in Brazil and Knightsville, more than one hundred miles north of Evansville, halted all production and announced that no coal would pass through Clay and Parke counties. They initiated a railway blockade, stopping and diverting all coal cars. Armed union men controlled tracks, intercepted trains and entered sealed cars to ascertain their contents before they were allowed to continue. In nearby Rosedale, where two hundred miners and their wives had seized and sidetracked a freight car, strikers permitted a small number of coal cars to pass under the condition that they did not contain "scab coal."[15]

Though rumors swirled that the unionists intended to destroy company infrastructure, their conduct was relatively orderly and democratic, with workers voting on walkout procedures and other tactics. Such actions nevertheless impeded traffic along the Terre Haute and Indianapolis Railroad, which ran from Indiana's capital through the west-central Indiana coalfields to East St. Louis, infuriating the business class. Pressured to act, Democratic governor Claude Matthews dispatched state militia to Daviess and Sullivan counties and swiftly crushed the walkout.[16]

Matthews's decisiveness on behalf of the owners won the bipartisan approval of professional-class institutions from across the state. In letters of congratulation, Chamber of Commerce presidents, Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) leaders, and the governor's political opponents likened the strikers to a mob of "traitors," "rioters," and "secessionists."[17] Meetings of Union veteran leadership in Indianapolis and Sheridan saw the strike as part of a new "civil war" instigated by a "heartless, brutalized foreign element" and carried out by "unpatriotic" aliens in mines, rail yards, and factories throughout the country. In their view, labor actions were inherent disruptions to "law and order," incompatible with the basic precepts of patriotism, and steered by

"insurrectionists" who were not rightfully American.[18] Citing the protection of private property, mail service interruption, and the need to restore regional commerce, GAR posts in Vevay, Delphi, Danville, Hillsdale, and elsewhere encouraged Matthews to swiftly suppress the workers, in some cases offering to take up arms and intervene on behalf of mine operators.[19] The towns of Shelbyville and Brookville alone tendered to the state the services of hundreds of Union veterans, men in their fifties and sixties, to help keep the strike broken.[20] Though most stopped short of dehumanizing the miners through racial types, even old soldiers who sympathized with the distressed strikers, such as the men of Meade Post No. 44 in Butler, urged the workingmen to express their grievances at the ballot box rather than "paralyze industry" by violating "the rights of property."[21]

As union miners debated the proper relation between race and class, they became targets not only of capitalists but also authoritative narrative creators. The nature of mine work—subterranean and dirty—had always reinforced the notion of miners as animal-like, and such concepts often fused with racial, ethnic, and, in the case of Little Egypt, regional stereotypes.[22] The United Miners' combination of class independence and interracialism led elites to cast unionists as violent, drunk, socially backward, and, in some cases, subhuman. Even as unions gained social legitimacy and the UMW moved toward market union cooperation, popular descriptions of colliers revealed the similarities and differences between racialization and class aesthetics and physiognomies. Bourgeois condemnations of miner hygiene were laced with political implications derived from older notions of coal regions as locales of "poor white trash" and of diggers as both physically and morally unclean.

Such characterizations were most common among paternalistic managers beyond small mining communities. In one instance of naked profit-seeking masquerading as concern for worker well-being, the National Coal Dealers' Association warned that miner inebriation hampered production, jeopardized distribution, and constituted a national energy crisis. During the First World War, owner and "dry" interests converged to argue that employee drinking was harming the Allied war effort. Some operators sought even to prohibit alcohol sales in high coal-producing regions or states—a revenue-generating measure that reinforced harmful regional generalities and proved a boon to the temperance advocates, who circulated "Coal or Booze" propaganda throughout the borderland.[23]

Well-meaning reformers who hoped to underscore the supposedly demeaning nature of mine work also represented miners as sotten and intem-

perate stock characters. One such case led citizens in Brazil, the capital of Indiana's most productive coal region, to resist what they considered "sweeping and shameful" mischaracterizations of their community by Josephine Nichols, head of Indiana's Women's Christian Temperance Union. Writing in the pages of the *Indianapolis Journal*, Nichols described payday in the town as a melee of "hundreds of drunken miners rioting in the streets" and "women afraid to venture abroad" for fear of bloodshed. "I have lived in Brazil for twenty-three years and have yet to see a riot of drunken miners," resident Mary Bassett Hussey responded. "On paydays the streets are thronged with women, many of them the wives of miners, who almost invariably take sole charge of the month's pay." Rather than Nichols's portrait of "starving and destitute" colliers woozy with drink, Hussey depicted hardworking families who imbibed no more or less than people in any other vocation. Most critically, she explained that miners—those who "dig [wealth] from the bowels of the earth at the risk of their lives"—were in fact responsible for the "princely fortunes" of operators and the bustling business of local merchants.[24] In other words, the problem was not that coal diggers were criminally inclined or culturally backward or perpetually sloshed; it was that they were exploited.

INDUSTRIAL WORKERS WERE NOT ANIMALS. Indeed, their very humanity—endeavoring to navigate a society that placed a lofty premium on possessing "white" skin—primed them for contradiction and conflict. The bloodiest showdowns occurred in southern and central Illinois during the late 1890s, which possessed a well-earned reputation for radicalism. Governor John Peter Altgeld had sent the state militia into coal towns nine times during the 1894 miners' strike, and African Americans served as key union organizers in places like Du Quoin and Harrisburg. Operators had great difficulty recruiting strikebreakers from the region owing to intense community support for the union, and contiguity to the South led them to regularly draw on southern Blacks.[25]

Calculated strikbreaking remained the employers' preeminent weapon, as "scabs," often deceived by corporate representatives, provided a dual function of providing cheap substitute labor and further dividing employees based on race. For many white workers, this race-class symbiosis—the equation of Blackness with economic threat—was so entrenched that it was often difficult to say precisely where union protection ended and racial hatred began.[26] In such cases, white communities saw racial banishment as both a response to

and a deterrent against attempts by management to undercut union labor. Not only did the introduction of African American strikebreakers catalyze communities to "go sundown," but establishing a reputation of racial intolerance proved one way of preventing Black replacements.[27] In that sense, labor conflicts in Virden, Pana, and Carterville provide striking examples of how union drives against strikebreakers devolved into community-wide mobilizations against Black citizens.

The most famous of these, Virden, culminated in a pitched battle between miners and armed guards of the Chicago-Virden Coal Company in October 1898. Anticipating conflict that fall, mine manager Fred W. Lukens hired fifty private sentries, ex-policemen from Chicago and agents of St. Louis's Thiel Detective Service Company, and ordered the building of a fortified stockade to separate forthcoming strikebreakers from union men.[28] When a trainload of Black strikebreakers appeared in Virden on September 24, union representatives notified them that they were entering a work stoppage. In Springfield, district president J. M. Hunter convinced Virden-bound "scabs" to deboard and go home. Unionists subsequently sidetracked train cars of Black workers en route to Pana at Tower Hill and Galesburg and persuaded them to leave the region. Bloodshed was temporarily averted.

However, less than three weeks later, Virden miners caught wind that another train was on its way. When approximately fifty African Americans from Birmingham arrived on the Chicago & Alton line, protected by Winchester-toting Thiel agents, six hundred unionists, including Black miners from Virden's local, surrounded the train cars, armed with pistols, shotguns, and hunting rifles.[29] Violence erupted; the strikebreakers never made it off the car, and when the dust cleared, seven miners and six Thiel agents lay dead. In an uncharacteristic check on employer power, Illinois governor John Riley Tanner, a Republican, scored political points by using the National Guard to prevent mine owners from bringing additional strikebreakers across state lines. Citing the will of the people, Tanner decried "this habit of importing negro labor into our state."[30]

The "battle of Virden" soon came to occupy a cherished place in union lore. United Miners and socialists observed Virden's anniversary each October as a triumph for class struggle unionism. Labor editors transformed miners' wives—the "Molly Pitchers of Virden"—into heroines, illustrative of growing, albeit highly gendered, women's representation in the movement.[31] In Murphysboro, unionists reinforced such conceptions of manhood by commemorating Virden alongside Decoration Day and its veneration of

Civil War veterans as part of a collective working-class "baptism of blood."[32] By the 1920s, "Virden Memorial Meetings" offered union colliers the opportunity to memorialize past endeavors and plot future actions, and Virden Day celebrations recalled downstate industrial battles as noble defiance of owner corruption and criminality.[33] Anniversary celebrations and the erection of UMW monuments in Mt. Olive, Diamond, and Taylorsville became part of an institutional memory that celebrated union successes as victories for free labor—even when those victories resulted in racial removal. Indeed, when the Chicago-Virden Coal representatives reached a settlement with union miners in November, owners agreed to racially segregate their operations, and Virden itself likely became a sundown town.[34] By 1910, the official Black population of the city where Black miners had once defended the union against Black strikebreakers had dwindled to nine, and a decade later, it stood at a mere three.[35]

In Pana, forty miles east, a comparable event began when hundreds of union men walked off the job in the summer of 1898 after Pana Coal Company owners refused to submit their differences to a board of arbitration. In addition to cost savings, operators made race a consideration in their recruitment of strikebreakers. Their first choice had been Chinese workers from the West, but state officials nixed those designs, and management ultimately followed Virden's lead by enrolling Black Alabamans. Company agents ran ads for "good colored miners" despite protests from the Afro-American Labor and Protective Association, which condemned the use of "all colored laborers carried [to Pana] and retained there by reason of the strike."[36] Owners then transported strikebreakers aboard "prison trains" with private police ordered to shoot any worker who attempted to leave.[37]

Victims later described the firm's duplicitous methods. According to African American miners Benjamin Lynch and Jack Anderson, corporate agents assured draftees from Birmingham, most of them experienced miners, that they were not entering a labor conflict. Rather, recruiters told Lynch and Anderson that they were needed to fill an employment shortage in opening a new mine because so many white miners had volunteered to fight against Spain in the Spanish-American War and would be gone for two years.[38] With support from a pro-owner sheriff, the company ramped up its mobilization efforts, promising employees competitive wages but ultimately paying them in company scrip. After a public meeting on August 23, the union dispatched representatives from Pana to Centralia to attempt to convince the first Black strikebreakers, encamped in grimy shacks near the Springside mine, to

turn back. Realizing the illegality and depth of owner coercion, the backup miners deserted by the dozen in the days that followed.[39] Steadfast operators responded by ordering guards to shoot any newcomer who tried to leave.[40]

As the Illinois Bureau of Labor reported, "Those who attempted to take the place of locked out miners did not move of their own volition, but came as an army, some of them in cattle cars, and all under the protection of Winchesters in the possession of men disqualified to perform police duty under the laws of this state."[41] Rumors swirled of approaching trains filled with replacement workers guarded by newly deputized policemen and company detectives, and any able-bodied Black man traveling the region soon risked being suspected of "scabbing."[42] In the coming months, the company recruited roughly seven hundred Black strikebreakers, as what one historian termed the "Slavic threat" of worker replacement in the Illinois coal fields shifted fully toward African Americans.[43]

Union men and city officials lined up on opposite sides of the conflict. The town mayor, Warren Penwell, a prominent Republican whose father owned the Penwell Coal Mining Company, had won his seat by championing "loyalty to employers," and the local police proved his willing servants. He and Sheriff Ira Coburn warned of impending "riots" and requested state aid from Governor Tanner. For his part, Tanner, who felt law enforcement was more invested in labor enforcement than community protection, questioned the owners' logic of backing strikebreakers at the supposed expense of Pana's "good, bona fide citizens."[44] Some unionists, meanwhile, grew increasingly determined to take matters into their own hands. Miners from Pana and surrounding communities—roughly a thousand in all—convened on the north side of town on the night of September 30. They voted to storm the Springside compound, where managers had fenced in the strikebreakers, who labored under armed deputies. Only the desperate intervention of UMW official William Topham and a Black miner known as Dean of Danville dissuaded the union men by convincing them that armed confrontation would prove suicidal. Although bloodshed had been temporarily averted, there was a growing sense of inevitable conflict. As one reporter predicted, "The crisis and clash between the negroes, deputies, operators, miners and officers is expected at any time . . . and apparently nothing can prevent its occurrence."[45]

In the weeks that followed, labor newspapers broadcast the presence of "import negro ex-convicts" in Pana as "a rape upon the liberties of free labor." Editors seesawed between portraying strikebreakers as dupes and slotting them into classed and racialized types as loafers, rapists, and murderers.[46]

The *Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen's Magazine* predicted that Illinois unionists who once preached the interracial gospel would soon "place the negro and the Chinaman in the same industrial position, except that the Chinaman is afraid to scab while the Southern negro aches for the opportunity."[47] The pairing of white grievance and racialized sexual innuendo alongside a righteous struggle against worker exploitation threatened to shift the delicate social and political balance from a fight against class injustice toward a negrophobic crusade. Swelling anti-Black sentiment notwithstanding, the fight in Pana that late summer and fall was primarily just that—a labor conflict and not yet an instance of racial removal. Even as union men urged African American strikebreakers to vacate the pits, the *United Mine Workers Journal* published want-ads for Black workers in Illinois's union mines experiencing temporary labor shortages.[48] This simultaneous push and pull concerning "imported" miners—welcoming and unionizing some while staunchly opposing others—involved a consideration of race ("labor" or "scab" qualified in racial terms), but it pivoted most on the perceived interests of the union.

In any case, blowback among local whites proved considerable, as interlaced fears of job competition and racial replacement grew with each passing week. Striking miners, who were, in the words of one unionist, "determined to have living wages and that the negro shall not supplant them," threatened the Alabamans with violence almost daily.[49] Meanwhile, race-baiting newspapermen alleged that drunken and insolent Blacks had practically taken over the community, menacing white women and children.[50] The labor press occasionally joined the chorus, warning that strikebreakers threatened civic order.[51] Some editors even maintained that "race war" had erupted in Pana and reported that "negro hoodlums" from across the South were "armed with Winchester rifles . . . parading through the streets" and threatening to loot the town. Others avowed that it was the Black strikebreakers' intention to expel white citizens, who were "terrorized and awaiting attacks expected to be made on their homes by negroes imported from Alabama." As one fireman envisioned: "The entire social fabric of the Northern states may crumble before the invasion of hordes of cheap negro laborers from the South—so far as Illinois is concerned an industrial race was has begun, and present appearances indicate that in the near future coal will be mined in Illinois at less than 25 cents a ton, and entirely by Southern negro labor."[52]

On the ground, a showdown was brewing between strikers and law enforcement.[53] Believing repeated press reports that the Alabamans would

attempt to "march into the city and drive out the whites," unionists intimidated strikebreakers and threatened to lynch white cops whom they viewed as corporate lackeys.[54] On September 1, a group of strikers kidnapped brothers David J. and Levi S. Overholt, the president and superintendent of the Springside Mine, and demanded the termination of non-union miners.[55] Although the Overholts were unharmed and soon released, escalating tensions led to a series of shootings on September 28, followed by an influx of "heavily armed" miners from neighboring towns, as well as the arrival of the state militia on September 30, with Gatling guns in tow. Claiming the mantle of true law and order against the anarchy of unbridled profit-seeking, union outlets reported that newly hired mine guards included paroled convicts and strikebreakers, and even the local police were on the company dole.[56] They charged African American miner "Big Henry" Stevens with inciting the "riot" that led to the town's deteriorating race and labor relations.[57] Others accused mine owners of treating strikebreakers as mere "Alabama coons" whom they encouraged to insult and loot to provoke an overreaction on the part of the union.[58]

In Springfield, Governor Tanner answered the union's pleas. His declaration against all "imported contract labor" offered UMW officials hope for a national law prohibiting interstate traffic in "convict labor producers."[59] However, Tanner's uncompromising language combined racial replacement—denunciation of "ex-convict negroes" who "take the place of white men"—with belligerency about meeting "imported foreigners" at the state line and "shooting them to pieces with Gatling guns." Southern Illinois was, in his interpretation, a "dumping ground" for "scum."[60] In practice, therefore, Tanner's ban took on ever more racial connotations and became, for many white Illinoisans, tantamount to Black exclusion. Comparing their plight to "the days of negro slaveholding in the South," Pana's white community shifted much of their ire toward "scab negro labor," enemies qualified by both union status and race.[61]

When accused of racial discrimination, Tanner clarified that he did not oppose the migration of any person based on color but stood "against importing labor to displace strikers."[62] Yet the governor's unmistakable association of "Black" with "scab" resonated among countless white miners and their families, who by the following spring classified their opponents as "operators, negroes, and white scabs."[63] It was a recipe for violence, as white unionists increasingly viewed themselves as not merely class victims but racial ones as well.

Meanwhile, conditions for Black strikebreakers—deceived and desperate, with precious few employment options—were tenuous and miserable. Rele-

gated to walled and segregated mine compounds, in part for their own safety and in part to separate them from union recruiters, Black replacements were paid less than their white non-union counterparts, often in company scrip, and housed in especially pitiable conditions, which locals pejoratively termed the "Alabama Hotel." With the populace against them, the contingent formed the Afro-Anglo Mutual Association under the leadership of Henry Stevens to both lobby for state protection for Black workers and maintain stable relations with locked-out whites. The Alabama Miners' Union and the Afro-American Labor and Protective Association worked with the UMW to expose the "slick-tongued white scoundrels who pose as labor employing agents" and thus halt the flow of strikebreakers northward.[64] In a formal meeting in Birmingham, Association leaders resolved to "condemn the action of the colored miners in going to Pana, remaining at Pana, or participating in any manner to aid the operators in carrying out their tyrannical designs against labor." The measure convinced white unionists that their Black comrades were "earnest in their efforts to prevent the further importation of colored men from Alabama to Illinois."

Further, the *Journal* urged its patrons to remove race from the equation. Richard L. Davis reiterated to unionists that their true enemies were owner "parasites," not fellow workers.[65] Arguing that strikebreakers should be condemned "as scabs," not because of "color, creed, or nationality," organizer William Scaife reminded white readers that "scabbing is just as vicious, deplorable, and damnable when practiced by a white as it is when done by a colored man."[66] And when a delegate referred to the Pana strikebreakers as "negro scabs" at the Illinois UMW convention, white committeemen pushed back. "We think the word negro is not proper," Charles H. Lewahl explained. After all, "scab" was purely a labor condition and should be used without a racial qualifier.[67]

Yet as the strike wore on, and as the employment of African American strikebreakers persisted, race and union status became ever more interchangeable in the eyes of Pana's white community. Moreover, white-on-Black hostility had the effect of "whitening" the town's immigrant minorities who, not being "white on arrival," folded their union identities into an overarching white worker status against racial and non-union outsiders.[68] With Tanner's removal of the last National Guardsmen from Pana the following spring, the Alabamans found themselves at the mercy of an economically aggrieved and racially primed citizenry despite the urging of union leaders for peaceful solutions. Fueled by newspaper accounts of Black criminality in the town and condemnations of newly flush Black workers "parading about the business

section of the city," citizens had anticipated a "payday riot" between unionists and African Americans throughout March 1899.[69] But it was on April 10, known as the day of "big trouble," that union miners used a dust-up between Stevens and a white deputy and the shooting of a white miner by a white cop to escalate an all-out assault on the Black work camp. Two whites and five Blacks were killed in the melee. Afterward, union miners chased groups of African Americans into the city jail, where they expected to be lynched.[70]

The Pana "riot" rendered the Black presence in Pana untenable, and residents soon dispersed under pressure from unionists who were predictably "jubilant" over the diminishing labor pool.[71] When owners shut down the mines that June to engage in arbitration with the union, the remaining Black miners found themselves out of work and destitute.[72] Fearing another massacre, the non-union men and their families began to abscond, with a reported 450 African Americans leaving town in the first week of July alone.[73] Groups returned to Alabama and West Virginia; others headed west to Indian Territory or Weir, Kansas. Some became strikebreakers in Carterville and Evansville, while others settled in East St. Louis and Springfield, which would soon experience their own brutal racial expulsions.[74]

In many cases, newspapers and word of mouth warned white locals in destination communities of the Black miners' impending arrival. This fanning out and its regional domino effect of instigating both anti-scab conflict and anti-Black violence speaks to the interconnected nature of labor competition, displacement, and coerced migration—the trends that were coming to define global capitalism's inequality and racial boundary-making playing out on a regional scale—as African American workers and their families pinged between sites of conditional employment and settlement. Sensing continuity between mass violence and racial restriction in the region, Lafayette Hershaw, co-editor of W. E. B. Du Bois's *The Horizon*, would later write, "Illinois has contributed more than its share to the reputation of the United States for lawlessness and mob rule. In the Alton riots and the murder of Lovejoy she [Illinois] only did what she has repeated at Pana."[75]

Union editors, meanwhile, hammered the mainstream press for its class-blind coverage. Although refusing to concede that the union men were guiltless, the *Journal* argued that most newspaper accounts were "greatly prejudiced" in favor of management. After all, mine owners refused to pay previously agreed-upon rates, eschewed independent arbitration, and undertook "malicious schemes" to "seduce" non-union strikebreakers from other states. Operators also bought off local police, hired private guards, and con-

structed a "prison wall" in the middle of a formerly peaceful community. The *Journal* concluded that employers and their "ignorant, villainous imported thugs," not honest union employees, had repudiated all "honorable means and methods" for settling the dispute. The result, if not the intended design, was to produce conflict between workers.[76] This telling was accurate but incomplete, obscuring the raced dimensions of banishment and refugeeism in the riot's aftermath. As in Virden, Pana's racial-labor conflict effectively inaugurated a sundown policy, in lore if not law, and the town's Black population, which had once been as many as one thousand, dwindled to virtually zero by 1900.[77] Four days after the Pana riot, the Illinois legislature passed a law that made it a crime for companies to induce workers to enter the state to act as strikebreakers. It was a capitulation to organized labor; it was also, in practice, a method of racial control.[78]

VIRDEN AND PANA WERE HARDLY singular. Similar tragedies played out throughout the region, including one hundred miles to the south, in the heart of Little Egypt. When white and Black diggers in Carterville struck in the fall of 1898, Samuel T. Brush, owner of the St. Louis and Big Muddy Coal Company, the largest producing mine in the state, flouted the United Miners and the Springfield scale by throwing unionists out of their homes and training 180 African American strikebreakers from Tennessee. One Black resident insisted that Brush had "dumped unwelcome people" into the community to "rob honest men."[79] Negotiations dragged on through the winter and into the spring. His security expenses mounting, Brush conceded to several demands but refused to recognize the union.[80] Striking miners, including some Black Tennesseans, threatened to refuse additional non-union workers entry to the town, and sporadic violence raged.[81] Union men burned company property, and two miners attacked Brush on the streets of Murphysboro.[82]

Events came to a head on June 30, 1899, when a Black miner's wife was killed by a group of union men firing into a train car carrying Brush and non-union workers from Pana, an act for which four Black union miners were later indicted.[83] In response, a group of strikebreakers reportedly burned the Black union hamlet of Union City, and National Guardsmen soon occupied the town. Six days after the Guardsmen departed, simmering tensions boiled over once more when a posse of several dozen whites killed five Black men at the Illinois Central station on September 17, leading the governor to yet again disperse troops to the southern Illinois coal fields.[84] Periodic violence contin-

ued for years, and under sustained pressure from the UMW, Brush eventually sold his operation to the Madison Coal Company, which acquiesced to union demands.[85]

The press fashioned the story, which began as an interracial strike against white ownership that employed both Black and white strikebreakers, into one of racial apocalypse. Predictably, southern newspapers ruthlessly leveraged labor bloodshed in Illinois to illustrate the so-called hypocrisy of "race war" in the symbolic shadow of the Great Emancipator, juxtaposing it with the South's titularly harmonious race relations. The northern press also explained that the killing had occurred because Black workers defied local custom by attempting to enter all-white Carterville, labeling what became known as "Bloody Sunday" as a "bloody war of the races" and a "riot" between "rival races."[86] Of course, the popular fixation on race war—and the emphasis on replacement miners not as comparably downtrodden workers or even as unwanted outsiders, but as a distinct type of enemy: the "*negro* scab"—delegitimized the grievances of both striker and strikebreaker by reinforcing a sense of synonymity between race and union status. Labor violence was indeed racialized and thus came to justify far more sweeping anti-Black policies and pogroms supported and enacted by an array of white actors across the class spectrum. However, consigning such events to race riot status squelched historical complexity by writing both class struggle and Black union miners out of the story.

Unionists, white and Black, complicated this reductive race war thesis. Humbling Jim Crow editors for deriving satisfaction from northern bloodshed, the *New York Times* admitted that while events in Virden and Pana were "shameful" and "humiliating," critics had also pushed "the wide limits of misrepresentation" by framing those developments as "due to racial prejudice." Instead, the *Times* forwarded a purely economic explanation, arguing that "white miners attacked the negroes not because they were black, but because they were willing to work for low wages."[87] Similarly, the New York reform journal *American Review of Reviews* reminded readers that "the history of the treatment of coal miners in Illinois has been one dark recital of treachery and oppression." Mine owners and Black strikebreakers had each acted in accordance with the law, but the former had willfully tapped into the resource fears of a subjugated segment of society to primarily exploit not their identities as white men but their livelihoods as workers. "To consider these Illinois troubles as primarily racial," it declared, "is an utter mistake."[88]

Some African American miners concurred, maintaining that race leaders were misleading workers by misinterpreting anti-strikebreaker violence

as anti-Black violence. Responding to a Black political convention in New Orleans that had denounced "the growing spirit of lynch law as exhibited in the recent slaying of colored miners in Illinois because they dared to compete with white men in the field of honest labor," the African American secretary of UMW Local 826 in Collinsville clarified that such bloody instances were rooted in labor competition and were not simply acts of race hatred. He explained that "if [southern Blacks] come up here to take the place of white miners, at reduced rates, they will also be taking the places of myself and other colored union men." In other words, non-union men were, above all, "scabs," and race may have played a role in but was not the essence of subsequent worker-on-worker violence. Just the same, the secretary sought to allay white "invasion" fears by urging organization between his white union and African American "brothers." Perhaps naively, he implored southern Blacks to unionize and to come north, if need be, to augment the growing power of the labor movement.[89]

Testimony from Black unionists underscored the injustices of mine labor, highlighted the union as a site of interracial partnership, and sought to shift the blame for intraworker violence from miners to owners. One such essay, published in the *Journal*, was the account of Black union miner E. A. Durden, who had been housed in the Williamson County jail for his role in the bloodshed at Carterville. Insisting that non-union mine labor was more crushing than either slavery or "the clanking chains of serfdom," Durden's portrait of incarcerated colliers involved police bribery, forced confessions, and the denial of visitors, mail, and legal representation to prisoners. He even detailed how the police had constructed a "bulwark" around the jail to cut off imprisoned miners from any access to the outside world. Durden explained that it was all part of "an unequal war" between workers, on the one hand, and the "iron hand of the capitalists" on the other, which, as in the case of Williamson County, included law enforcement and numerous public officials. The class position of miners left them "handicapped" by the "official trickery and oppression" of operators, who wielded power to not only stymie labor actions but also to buy legal protection and create popular "prejudice." Owners, in other words, possessed the capacity to shape mass narratives about worker-on-worker violence as debased, irrational, or simply a matter of race hatred rather than material struggle.

Further, Durden maintained that Samuel Brush's efforts to "deceive the public" paralleled his attempts to divide and defraud his workers as part of the company's shrewd cycle of employment practices. Since 1896, Brush had

staved off unionization by recruiting Black strikebreakers, and when those strikebreakers became "fully aware of the injustices that were being perpetrated upon them" or invariably demanded pay raises of their own and walked off the job, as was the case with Black miners from Tennessee in May 1899, Brush simply terminated them and brought in a new wave of recruits. Though some were cast-offs from other strike zones, Brush's agents conscripted most of their "scabs" from the South, thus ensuring that the workmen possessed little knowledge of local labor conditions. He did so with the aid of select African Americans, including a Black contractor named Hawshaw, whose racial status and vocation as a preacher made him an especially convincing recruiter. According to Durden, Brush's entire mining operation was not merely a racket of abuse but also an exemplar of mass deception.[90]

Ultimately, the tragedies of Virden, Pana, and Carterville offer case studies in how progressive class wars devolved into the catastrophe of racialized social and labor formation, animating longstanding exclusionist impulses as strikebreakers threatened both the livelihoods of union men and the racial sensibilities of the wider community. Racism did not create but certainly exacerbated the self-preservationist instincts of white unionists, prompting the white populace to first forcibly remove African American replacements before broadening their targets to include Black residents generally. The misrepresentation of this process as "race war" and the larger deterioration of race relations within the working class imparted gains to certain workers, but it was an unqualified boon to owners, whose profit margins hinged upon a disunified proletariat. In sum, the production of racial difference and the leveraging of cultural variation—with the looming idea of a racial border heightening the likelihood and intensity of white-on-Black violence—proved disastrous for working people.[91]

These fateful outcomes were hardly foreordained. Counterexamples, even in southern Illinois, demonstrate how integration and shared toil and exploitation created the conditions for labor solidarity. By the turn of the century, the city of Du Quoin, an interracial town in a sundown county, had a stable Black community that dated to the "contraband" influx of the Civil War. Although most African Americans lived in a segregated locale, "the Bottoms," as second-class citizens, Du Quoin averted the level of racial-labor conflict seen in all-white towns due to its longstanding Black settlements and union support among African Americans. For the town's white people, racial designations presumably proved secondary enough to conceptions of occupation and class to limit racial violence.[92] And although whites dis-

tinguished between "our blacks" and racial outsiders, African Americans, too, "othered" southern Blacks as "aliens" despite their joint racial status. As Black resident Ruby Berkeley Goodwin explained in 1915, African American migrants from the South were "the first real aliens we had ever seen. I say 'first real aliens' because these men, though bound to us by ties of color, were much more foreign than the immigrant Irish, Polish, German, and Italian workers . . . who were bound together by the common dangers they shared each day in the pits."[93]

In time, Black unionists became victims thrice over—first as workers of a persecuted race, and then in popular memory. Although regarded by many as "race wars" in the moment, the Illinois "coal wars," as they came to be known within mining communities, were also whitened by collective commemoration. Even as labor violence loomed large in local remembrance, it came to marginalize Black union miners just as local laws, customs, and enforcement mechanisms were excluding them from Virden, Pana, Carterville, and countless other rural and small-town white communities across the Midwest.[94] Historian Rosemary Feurer argues that the dominant storyline did not become one of "rival races" either, as locals subsumed race altogether within the theme of class conflict. Black people, union and non-union alike, were simply erased from the commemorative landscape just as they were being barred from white society.[95] Prairie poet Carl Sandburg's 1917 work, "Sayings of Henry Stephens," based loosely on Henry Stevens and the Black mining experience in Pana, spoke to racism's calamitous effects on labor unity, the supposed contradiction of a color line in the Land of Lincoln, and the crippling residue of white identity within the working class:

Springfield is Abraham Lincoln's town.
There's only eight mines out of twenty
In Sangamon County
Where the white miners
Let a negro work.
If I buy a house right next to the Peabody mine
That won't do no good.
Only white men digs coal there.
I got to walk a mile, two miles, further
Where the black man can dig coal.[96]

CHAPTER 12

Kingdom of Smoke

By the second decade of the twentieth century, the United States produced nearly half the world's coal. More than two-thirds of the nation's mine workers were organized by the UMW, which had gained wide popular approval, as owner thuggery and appalling fatality rates reinforced a broad sense of "industrial injustice," especially in the borderland's bituminous strongholds.[1] Southern Illinois had earned a reputation as "union's citadel," and diggers in Williamson and Franklin counties, which contained half the state's sixty thousand miners, demonstrated particular loyalty to the organization that enhanced their compensation and ameliorated their horrific working conditions.[2] Union growth in this "Kingdom of Smoke," so named by poet and Du Quoin native Stanley Kimmel, known affectionately as the "Sandburg of the coalfields," spread the doctrine of racial inclusion and non-discrimination, which remained the official line.[3] Unionists articulated the dangers of race prejudice and xenophobia to their fragile movement, and numerous UMW resolutions acknowledged that, in the words of one official, anti-Black racism, not African American inferiority, made "the despised vocations of scabbing, strikebreaking, and general dishonesty" a "necessity of [Black] economic life."[4] One statute explained, "Discrimination inside of the organization gives organized capital the opportunity to fire the prejudices of the workers." There was nothing that benefited owners more than workers "fighting each other and hurling at each other such epithets as 'Dago,' 'Round-head,' 'Bo Hunk,' and 'Nigger.'"[5]

World war tested both ideals and union legitimacy. Global capitalist competition for resources and markets bred conflagration, discharging a host of conservative forces that expanded the potential for worker-on-worker vio-

lence along the border—violence which then reinforced miner dehumanization. While most union colliers expressed what historian Gary Gerstle terms "working-class Americanism," new emphases on political nationalism, sometimes defined along ethnic and racial lines, threatened to stunt worker unity.[6] Although the contours of labor loyalty shifted, the idea that strike actions were "tantamount to insurrection against the republic" defined the era.[7] Local vigilante groups, led by business leaders, conducted "Loyalty Round-Ups" to promote spread-eagle nationalism and suppress "Kaiserism."[8] The jingoistic tide swept up labor leaders as well, and they made production synonymous with "the cause of democracy" and deemed wartime strikes the "un-American" work of German spies and socialist agitators.[9] But rather than create consensus, the patriotic push often widened the catalysts of exclusion in southern Illinois beyond union status and race, with an increased focus on ethnicity and ambiguous notions of fidelity to the nation-state. As historian Carl R. Weinberg argues, "The working-class patriotism that the war unleashed . . . divided workers as much as it united them." Miners' attempts to meet employers' and politicians' "patriotic" demands turned working people against one another in new and alarming ways.[10]

This was evident in Collinsville, where in the spring of 1918 a mob led by union miners lynched Robert Paul Prager, a German immigrant with socialist sympathies accused of treasonous deportment. Guided by miner Joseph Riegel, the perpetrators stole Prager from the jail, where he had been housed for his own protection, draped him in a U.S. flag, dragged him through the streets beyond town limits, and fatally hanged him. The press characterized the murder as the work of an "anti-German mob," and historians since have viewed it as constitutive of the national trends of wartime ethnic polarization and an unfolding red scare. Yet a matrix of local factors precipitated the incident. Collinsville was nearly half German-American, and many of its union miners were devoted socialists, District 12 vice president Adolph Germer and Local No. 685 president and Socialist Party mayoral candidate Robert Bertolo among them. Neither Germanism nor socialism alone would have been a sufficient cause for Prager's murder. However, both smelter workers and union miners in Collinsville had recently struck, with unionists attacking African American strikebreakers on the streets. Moreover, only months earlier, the ringleaders in Prager's lynching had stood accused of disloyalty by union officials for partaking in a wildcat strike. According to historian E. A. Schwartz, "A racial challenge had been superimposed on an already heated labor situation." Prager had left a negative impression on the supposedly disloyal

miners of Collinsville when he let his intentions known to become a mine manager, raising suspicions that he was a spy for coal operators. By lynching him, unionists perhaps saw an opportunity to both demonstrate their loyalty and protect their trade. In effect, a crime based on perceived treason to the union was remembered as one rooted in disloyalty to the nation, and it allowed supposedly seditious union men like Riegel to prove their fidelity to the Americanism movement.[11]

Though a national wave of labor militancy crested in 1919 with the Seattle General Strike and steelworker walkouts in Chicago and Cleveland, anticommunist hysteria, government repression, and an increasingly conservative labor bureaucracy induced craft unions toward accommodation and top-down business unionism. Some labor institutions—the left wing of the Socialist Party and the nascent Communists—recognized strikebreaking as a final recourse for victims of racial injustice.[12] The Industrial Workers of the World, for one, excoriated the "narrow-minded policy of excluding the Negro from trade unions [which] often forces him to become a strikebreaker against his will."[13] Yet AFL chief Samuel Gompers, who advocated Chinese and southern European restriction, used the words *negro* and *scab* interchangeably and painted African American strikebreakers as threatening to "Caucasian civilization," portending anti-Black violence in East St. Louis and elsewhere.[14]

Sociologist Terry Boswell explains, "Because the AFL's organizing efforts coincided with the black migration, the labor movement's response to a new (and rapidly growing) segment of the industrial workforce institutionalized rather than obviated longstanding divisions in organized labor."[15] Racism and red scare inhibited organizing drives across the borderland, and union rolls contracted throughout the decade. Socialist Frank Bohn wrote in 1925: "There is at present more bitterness toward the Negro in the Middle West than there has been in the South since the days of Reconstruction."[16]

Manifestations of that bitterness in East St. Louis and Collinsville led one U.S. senator to label the neighboring cities "the Sodom and Gomorrah of Illinois."[17] There were, of course, other Sodoms and other Gomorrahs—albeit grounded not in timelessness and divination but in discrete political and material conditions. The most striking example was the city of Herrin, one hundred miles southeast of East St. Louis, which experienced one of the deadliest episodes of labor violence in U.S. history in the summer of 1922. As operators scaled back war-level production, workers and owners clashed over pay scales and hours, prompting the UMW, now headed by John L. Lewis, to commence what would grow into its largest-ever strike. Hundreds of thousands of

miners across the Central Competitive Field—50,000 in Ohio, 30,000 in Indiana, and 90,000 in Illinois—soon walked off the job.[18] The strikes as a whole were peaceable, but they also produced what media outlets called "the most brutal and horrifying crime that has ever stained the garments of organized labor." That infamy occurred near Herrin, in Williamson County, a heavily unionized community where native-born Protestant (mostly Baptist) union miners with ancestors from the upland South worked, sometimes uneasily, alongside foreign-born workers of Italian and Slavic Catholic descent. The rocky transition to a peacetime economy and the influx of European-born immigrants into the coal regions exacerbated ethnocultural conflict between "dry" Protestants against "wet" Catholics, threatening to upend any semblance of working-class collaboration.[19]

Tensions escalated when William J. Lester, owner of the Southern Illinois Coal Company, violated his agreement with the UMW by attempting to move coal during the strike. Possibly assuming that union men would be less likely to retaliate against white strikebreakers, Lester used a Chicago-based employment agency to recruit all-white non-union replacement workers, which included European-born laborers. He protected the newcomers with thirty private guards from the Hargraves Detective Agency, armed with a machine gun and under the direction of C. K. McDowell, who had honed his union-busting chops in Colorado.[20] Lester's private army intimidated and assaulted local residents. A grand jury would later blame him for fomenting violence through aggressive managerial tactics and attempting to "operate a non-union mine under armed guard in the midst of such intense union sympathies as prevail in Williamson County."

Locals, miners, and non-miners alike complained incessantly about the conduct of Lester's hired gunmen. Sequestered from the community, the replacement workers also drew citizens' anger as guards closed county roads and bullied residents, sometimes overriding city police, who sympathized with their friends, neighbors, and family members in the union. Concurrently, some observers interpreted Lewis's pronouncement that strikebreakers in Herrin were "an outlaw organization" as a tacit endorsement of violence.[21] In other words, urban-rural division and ethnic prejudice fused with non-union threat—the "inborn hatred of the scab operator and the scab miner"—as Herrinites increasingly appraised the influx of non-union workers as an "invading" force.[22]

On the afternoon of June 21, a group of unionists surrounded Lester's strip mine in protest. The gathering was either an attempt at constructive interven-

tion or the first step of a dangerous riot, depending on the source. The UMW reported that the union men had simply hoped to convince the strikebreakers to quit.[23] However, mine guards opened fire, and three unionists dropped dead or were mortally wounded. With local authorities refusing to act on behalf of the strikebreakers and increased political pressure to close the mine, the replacement workers surrendered. It initially seemed as though further bloodshed would be averted. Yet as the prisoners tramped back to Herrin, a revenge-minded posse waiting near an intersection called Crenshaw Crossing executed McDowell and fired on the others. One collier reportedly threatened, "Let's see how fast you can run between here and Chicago!"[24] Six men who attempted to flee were brought to Herrin Cemetery, strung up, tortured, and killed. Reporter J. E. Hendricks of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* arrived on the scene to witness three of them with their throats cut, others bound with rope, and one hanging from a tree. Someone reportedly used a hot iron to brand the word *scab* onto the slain superintendent's torso as a mob that included white and Black, men and women, and immigrant and native-born looked on approvingly. In all, twenty-three people, three union miners and twenty non-union workers, lay dead.[25]

The bloodletting shocked a nation that had just endured the "the war to end all wars." Some critics pointed out that, in the case of anti-Black lynching, parts of the United States had been long governed by mob rule. The only difference in Herrin was that the victims were white and that the atrocities happened to inconvenience powerful business interests.[26] But what the *Chicago Tribune* trumpeted as "the most revolting crime in American history" did not simply engender degrees of sorrow and outrage or charges of racial double standard; it also confirmed anti-labor politics, as well as class and ethnic predilections.[27] With the Mexican and Russian revolutions and the First World War serving as obvious parallels, middle-class observers across the nation viewed "bloody Williamson" as equivalent to Mexican banditry, European-style anarchy, or German atrocities on the Western Front.[28] Newspersons drew on stereotypes regarding the "alien element" to explain the source of miner depravity. "Herrin is foreign," one correspondent explained, "Italian, Polish, Hungarian, and mongrel breeds from Europe. They are unassimilated . . . brutal and ignorant."[29] Backdropped by both growing calls for immigrant restriction and the infamous Palmer Raids, in which the Department of Justice arrested and deported suspected leftists with little regard for legal process, they characterized Herrin's union men (often incorrectly) as not only foreign-born "undesireables" but traitorous "reds" loyal to Debs and the IWW. Anti-labor

sentiment corresponded with pro-property ideology as news outlets castigated Herrin's coalfield "Bolsheviks" for purportedly burning company infrastructure and robbing the firm's safe.[30] The alleged existence of a "little soviet" in the heartland of U.S. democracy and the "barbarity" of its inhabitants drove one editor to wonder, "Is Herrin a part of the United States?"[31] Others concocted the slanderous phrase "Egypt the red"—a double entendre signifying both the region's subversive politics and its blood-stained fields.[32]

Businessmen, editors, and politicians nationwide used the incident to reactivate popular notions of miners as preternaturally violent and southern Illinois as what one editor called "an unconquered province of lawlessness."[33] Penning an exposé on "Bloody Williamson" for the *New York Herald*, journalist Thoreau Cronyn described a people "distinctively Southern in their speech, habits and cooking" and a place of "feudal tradition" where residual honor culture often lent itself to vigilantism. He likewise noted the paucity of African Americans, who had been recurrent victims of racial banishment. Considering the obscure origins of the moniker "Little Egypt," Cronyn maintained that while the fertile soil of the southern Illinois flood plains may have resembled that of the Nile, others theorized that "Egypt" came to be because its inhabitants had, presumably like Africans, lived "in a state of mental darkness." Although consistent with popular stereotyping of the region's poor whites, Cronyn nevertheless identified scarcity consciousness as a primary reason for Little Egypt's racial illiberalism. "There have been so many 'race riots' in southern Illinois," he explained, "caused usually by the importation of negro labor from the South and the resistance of white Northern labor."[34]

Other observers were certain that Herrin had been the work of uncivilized and innately violent "scum"—"union murderers" who were not fully human. One pundit, "sickened with union domination," alleged that only "vermin" were capable of reenacting the most vicious scenes from No Man's Land.[35] Some turned to settler and anti-Indian tropes to illustrate how Herrin represented an inversion of civilization theory, with "foreign-born" victims and white men performing the traditional role of non-whites. The *Chicago Tribune* deemed it "a murderous community" and likened Herrin's union miners to the "savages" of the Great Plains.[36] Similarly, the *New York Herald* proclaimed the massacre the most ignominious act of carnage in U.S. history since the Battle of Little Bighorn. In fact, editors argued that violence was made worse, and somehow more unnatural, because the mob had not been "savages" or "negroes," but "white men, most of them native-born, from generations of American stock."[37]

New York's *Daily News*, meanwhile, likened the miners of Williamson County to unruly secessionists—a slander that had been leveled at heavily Democratic Little Egypt since the early days of the Rebellion.[38] Members of the professional class, including the Illinois Manufacturers Association, also drew on wartime platitudes, framing the massacre as a betrayal of the state's mythologized prairie democratic spirit and wondering how it could have possibly occurred in the "Home of Lincoln."[39] While raising funds for the prosecution, the Illinois Chamber of Commerce went so far as to circulate a map of the state with a black spot over Williamson County and the words "Remove this blot."[40] That blot represented what the *New York Times* rebuked as one of the "little islands of class rule" that dotted southern Illinois. In this reading, the supremacy of the *wrong* class—the working class—had accounted for the bloodshed.[41]

Although the relatively organic and spontaneous nature of the massacre was indicative of the class makeup of the perpetrators, elites across the nation took the simplistic headline of working-class guilt and ran with it. Industrialists, civic clubs, manufacturers' associations, and chambers of commerce bombarded Governor Lennington Small with hundreds of letters denouncing the murders and urged him to use all available authority to prosecute the guilty. In mutually reinforcing classist, racist, sexist, and anticommunist shibboleths, aggrieved elites compared Herrin's union miners, and in some cases the local population (whom they blamed for protecting the guilty), to "barbarians," "devils," "scum," and "rebels crazed with moonshine."[42] Some critics indicted community women especially for allegedly neglecting their children and failing to exhibit the standards of respectable motherhood.[43] Others merged "white trash" characterizations with red-baiting reaction, censuring Herrin's colliers as "Bolsheviks," "syndicalists," "dynamiters," and "anarchists."[44] Combining anti-Americanism with ethnic stereotyping, such anti-labor voices specifically berated the "bloodthirsty Italians" who had carried out the type of butchery once reserved for the beast-like "Huns" of the late war.[45] Exploiting Native American "savagery" tropes, they likewise denounced Herrin's unionists as "wild Indians" who had, according to one Rotary Club, perpetuated the most "barbarous" infraction against Americans "since the days of Indian warfare."[46] Chicago members of the National Founders Association concurred that union violence had been "worthy of the Apache artists of cruelty in their prime."[47]

Indeed, representatives of numerous owners' associations agreed that the transgressions owed to shared traits among the miners and their fam-

ilies: they were either disloyal in their politics, un-American in their comportment, or "not quite white" in their racial classification. This "othering" of Herrin's union miners was part and parcel of the chorus of revenge that emanated from the nation's business classes. The Illinois Chamber of Commerce "howled for blood" and raised $25,000 to support the prosecution of the guilty parties. The Associated Employers of Indianapolis, founded in 1904 to promote the open shop and combat "professional agitators and strike promoters," advised business leagues, civic clubs, churches, and all "red-blooded" citizens to censure the acts in Herrin by aggressively eliminating the "disloyal propaganda" of industrial unionism.[48] Alfred M. Ogle, president of the National Coal Association (NCA), blamed UMW officials for inciting class antagonism and refusing to accept owners' so-called reasonable offers.[49]

Representing mine operators across the country, the NCA soon published *The Herrin Conspiracy*, a purportedly "comprehensive" account of the massacre that doubled as a sweeping anti-union polemic. Placing the blame squarely on so-called UMW negligence, the tract explained that, to the horror of the nation, "Hun atrocities" had taken place on American soil. The origin source of the violence was institutional and reflective of "unionized labor sentiment." It was not coincidental, the owners argued, that the most gruesome incident of worker-on-worker cruelty occurred in Williamson County, one of the most densely unionized parts of the country. Indeed, elites alleged that the brutal spasm was not the result of longstanding labor discontent and inequality or a political discourse highlighting how intrinsically different "outsiders" looked to replace precarious locals. Rather, the "anarchistic" UMW had undertaken a well-organized "conspiracy" to halt production at all costs—proof that managers needed to exert greater control over all aspects of mine production.[50]

Meanwhile, the UMW denounced the massacre while situating it in the broader context of anti-worker violence. An aged Gompers, who would be dead within months, condemned any use of physical force by unionists, which was seen by some as a faint defense of the mining companies if not a full-on double cross. Union officials likewise deemed the incident the most serious reputational tarnish the organization had ever suffered, and responded by underscoring its patriotism and commitment to "law and order." Blood had been spilled, they insisted, not because but despite of the union. They reminded the public that capitalists had attempted to kill miner organization in the cradle and that coal operators had since resorted to every conceivable method to break the union, including ceaseless attempts to "provoke [unionists] into acts of violence." UMW President John L. Lewis immediately dis-

avowed the bloodshed, even blaming the massacre in part on the imprint of Bolshevism, but he too highlighted the role of "sinister influences" perpetuated by "lawless agents" within the miners' ranks. By this, Lewis meant company detectives whose sole purpose was to extract information, sow division, and goad employees toward retaliation.[51]

The UMW's defense of its "pure Americanism," however, constituted its own anti-worker script. Out of both self-preservation and sincere belief, union leaders deflected blame by targeting Communists and leveraging the tragedy to neuter revolutionary impulses within the rank and file. Some insisted the upheaval was meant to be an outright insurrection, effected by a clandestine operation of red Lithuanians taking orders from Moscow; others blamed members of the American Communist Party and "one big union" subversives such as William Z. Foster.[52] In scapegoating radical workers, UMW officials carried water for anti-labor elites. For instance, after conducting a "study" into the causes of the massacre, *United Mine Workers Journal* editor Ellis Searles wrote six newspaper articles alleging that Bolshevik "propaganda work" led directly to the massacre. He detailed how nineteen Communist organizers from Party headquarters in Chicago had supposedly infiltrated the camps and, along with several dozen red sympathizers already in Herrin, convinced idle miners to take up "armed rebellion." The facts of Searles's arguments were tenuous at best, and they stripped both unionists and citizens of their agency by presenting them as the manipulable puppets of party apparatchiks. Even so, the narrative gained traction in high places. Searles later published the essays in pamphlet form, titled "Attempts by Communists to Seize the American Labor Movement," and distributed copies to the U.S. Congress. Under the recommendation of Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, it was then printed as an official Senate document and acquired wide currency among conservative political leadership.[53]

Frustrated by such developments, union miners, local supporters, and organized workers across the state recognized that the massacre was fast becoming "an anti-union text for the business interests of the country."[54] One labor editor proclaimed, "American capital is getting ready to stage a bloodier orgy than ever was staged on the industrial arena of this country," using Herrin as a guise.[55] In return, miners in and beyond the region blamed the violence on Lester's use of "scab" coal diggers, whom one AFL representative deemed "members of the hired army of capital."[56] Frank Farrington, president of the Illinois Mine Workers, lamented how Kiwanians, Rotary Clubs, and the state's middle-class civic societies, as well as "labor-hating" attorneys and

press agents in Chicago, had nakedly exposed themselves as "opponents of the principles of trade unionism."[57] Accounting for this perspective, the socialist press described the events as less a massacre than a courageous and spirited class battle. Even some of the Herrin strikebreakers who had been targeted blamed the carnage on mine companies and their hirelings. One replacement miner allegedly remarked, "The people to shoot are the mine owners who lied to get us down here and then made us do scab work. I tried to leave the mine when I found what I have been brought from Chicago for, but the guards wouldn't let me go."[58]

Most miners and their families blamed the conduct of the Southern Illinois Coal Company and its nefarious mercenaries. One pro-union account, authored by R. E. Baty, construed the killings as the predictable result of owner impropriety. "A True Story of the So-Called Herrin Massacre" contended that company offenses against the general peace stemmed from longstanding combativeness on the part of "money-mad operators," and specifically the increased presence of Lester's machine-gun toting "army." Baty, who operated a cooperative grocery store in nearby Sesser, judged mine guards to be provocateurs, often with criminal records, whose abuses were protected by local officials under company control and who were emboldened by assurances that they would not be prosecuted for any crimes committed. As such, the buildup and encroachment of these "hired assassins" constituted an "invasion" by "an army of professional man-killers" operating outside the law.

Mine guards, typically qualified as interlopers "from Chicago," had allegedly destroyed property, insulted women, killed livestock, fired potshots at local farmers, held up civilian motorists, and illicitly stopped and searched town residents. As popular resentment grew, retaliation became imminent. The influx of heavily armed militants to "protect corporate property" was in fact an act of corporate belligerence. In other words, most Herrinites believed it was not so much the basic and inevitable conflict between workers and owners that primed the powder keg but the presence of hostile agents and the specific acts of aggression they directed against the community.[59]

Other union sympathizers viewed non-union miners as an illegitimate form of labor and saw any attempt to introduce them as a direct attack on the local citizenry. Williamson County State's Attorney Lewis L. Duty, for instance, blamed the massacre on coal proprietors who had "imported non-union workmen when they knew that such action would lead to war."[60] Similarly, William G. Sneed charged Lester with "intimidation" and censured him for dubbing the union miners "Bolsheviks." A state senator and vice pres-

ident of the Herrin subdistrict, Sneed reminded voters that it was Lester's strikebreakers and armed guards, not local union men, who had disrupted the social equilibrium and injected a martial dynamic into the disagreement between owners and workers. He held Lester "solely responsible" for all subsequent bloodshed, as well as "the stigma and smirch" now attached to the region. To such allies within union-dense counties like Williamson, strikebreaking was more than a tactic—it was a species of collective economic violence that violated what it meant to be "free."[61]

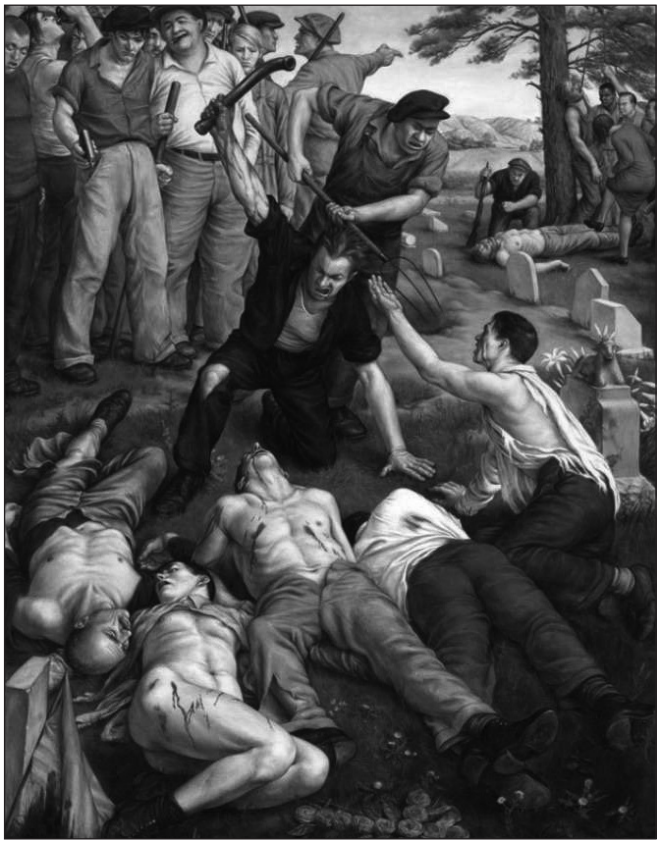
Labor left organizations at the state and national levels agreed. They maintained that the mayhem in Herrin may have culminated with the June 22 killings, but it began with implacable owners and, more immediately, the murder of union men on June 21. The events as a whole, therefore, constituted a "battle," not a "massacre," and part of a longstanding "war" between workers and owners. Betraying their own prejudice against transient foreign-born workers, the Illinois Farmer-Labor Party proclaimed that the spasmodic slaying of non-union miners, "the scum of Chicago slums," paled in comparison to the ongoing path of death and destruction sowed by the Illinois Manufacturers' Association and their anti-labor allies, the Illinois Chamber of Commerce and the attorney general's office. In his 1923 tract *Government Strikebreaker: A Study of the Role of the Government in the Recent Industrial Crisis*, Jay Lovestone of the Workers Party of America reminded readers that mine owners cared about basic humanity only insomuch as it impacted their bottom line. Any suddenly feigned concern for the sacredness of human life, whether of union men or strikebreakers, was a mere pretext for their ultimate aim: the destruction of organized labor in the indomitable pursuit of wealth. According to Lovestone, the brutality at Herrin had been, at its essence, "a gory monument to the coal operators' mad lust for profits."[62]

Meanwhile, locals resisted assaults by yellow journalists on the region and its workers.[63] Pointing out that the vast majority of the populace had not participated in the rampage, southern Illinois editors published accounts that included acts of mercy and kindness on the part of Herrin residents. Others combated through local news outlets what they saw as public and governmental favoritism toward the mine owners. A committee of union representatives from Herrin, Marion, Carterville, Cambria, Johnston City, and Benton who met in late July used tabloids to oppose the presence of National Guardsmen in their communities and the reopening of the mines under federal control.[64] Two Herrin natives even made national news that fall for staunchly defending their hometown after being arrested for carrying concealed weapons in

Cincinnati. The city may have suffered "a black eye with the rest of the world," they explained, but it was a generally peaceful community and not deserving of the scorn now heaped upon it.[65]

Rejecting the "machinery of propaganda" from pro-owner treatises such as the National Coal Association's *The Herrin Conspiracy*, the Illinois Mine Workers maintained that bloodshed was the inexorable result of owner intransigence and the increased presence of private police who operated outside the law. Their circular, *The Other Side of Herrin*, which was likely co-authored by Baty, explained that mortality was nothing new to Illinois miners, thousands of whom had been casualties in not only guard-on-worker skirmishes but also in floods, explosions, fires, cave-ins, and other disasters stemming from employer negligence. From Diamond to Avondale, there had been, in truth, dozens of bloodlettings victimizing thousands of miners in the Illinois coal fields through unsafe working conditions and corporate malfeasance. But tragedy only became "massacre" when union miners retaliated momentarily against the unremitting and innate violence of capital.[66] Although the caricature of foreign, wild-eyed union men and respectable and lawful operators proved a blue chip for those a defense attorney from nearby Harrisburg deemed the "organized wealth of the nation," the ultimate failure of the courts to convict any of the accused unionists validated the Illinois Mine Worker perspective, at least locally. In the end, witnesses for the prosecution were strikebreakers and "the business and professional men of Herrin." Defense witnesses, in contrast, were virtually all union miners and farmers. "There was a clear-cut class division" in the trial, one editor reported, and "the capitalist press simply went wild with enraged hysteria."[67]

Ultimately, the Herrin massacre was remembered as one of the most tragic instances of labor violence in U.S. history. A 1924 article titled "Civilization of Herrin, Illinois" argued that, in effect, there was no civilization in Herrin. Authored by Roland W. Harper, an esteemed botanist from Alabama, the essay downplayed productive relations and the role of competition under capitalism, supposing instead that a "lack of culture" led the region to "rank low in most measures of civilization."[68] Memory confirmed popular stereotypes regarding "alien" southern Illinois miners and, like Paul Cadmus's 1940 painting, *Herrin Massacre*, emphasized the unalloyed sadism of the union assassins (Figure 9).[69] As one observer saw it, the executions offered proof that Herrin was simply "a city of fear . . . fear of the businessman, of the worker . . . fear begotten of fear."[70] However, trade unionists and their allies—leftists, community members, and even some strikebreakers—insisted on contextualizing



COURTESY COLUMBUS MUSEUM OF ART

Figure 9. Paul Cadmus, *Herrin Massacre,* 1940. Reflecting popular characterizations of the unionists by depicting the perpetrators as drunken and brutish, the painting also illustrates the mob's interracial composition.

that fear by relating how violence derived not from ancient grudges of blood but from politics and materiality. The massacre was not, in other words, an act of utter irrationality, nor a mere expression of racial or ethnic antipathy, but a predictable symptom of economic oppression, perhaps aggravated by a century of place-based othering and racialized boundary-making. However, for much of the nation, the slaughter had assumed both real and perceived ethnocultural dimensions—urban vs. rural, Protestant vs. Catholic, immigrant vs. native born, civilized vs. barbaric—that played into the hands of "race war" promoters whose frequent effect, if not explicit aim, was to subvert inexpedient questions of power and property. Narratives of an intrinsically backward region and its homicidal, tribally devoted miners were reductive and sensational—and part of a class project.

TRUE "RACE WAR" RADIATED OUTWARD not from interracial and multiethnic unions but from white professionals, manifested through the Ku Klux Klan during the 1920s. Openly nativist, anti-Semitic, and anti-Catholic, as well as anti-Black, the resurrected Klan was most concentrated in the industrial Midwest, unifying Protestant and petty-bourgeois elements.[71] In the borderland, the Klan saw its earliest and greatest political victories in Evansville, where adherents directed their prejudice primarily against the German-Catholic working class.[72] Under the leadership of coal dealer David C. Stephenson, Klansmen captured City Hall in 1924 and eventually boasted more than five thousand members—nearly one-quarter of the city's native-born white men.[73] Upriver, there were more than twelve thousand Klan members in Cincinnati, and that number grew in proportion to perceived community disorder and economic unrest, including labor strife.[74] There, the Klan represented a backlash against increased political and economic competition, a rejoinder to labor volatility, a violent reply to mass African American migration, and a reaction against perceived "others" in favor of "one hundred percent Americanism," as Klan newspapers bulletined demonstrations of hooded marchers as "The Answer of Illinois Protestants to Invasion of Alien Romanist Forces."[75] Above all, the Klan became synonymous with social restriction along racial, religious, ethnic, and native or foreign-born lines—all under the pretext of "community protection." In the region's cities undergoing rapid and often disorienting social and economic change, prohibitory understandings of belonging had been honed by a century of "invasion" fears.[76]

The Klan was not, however, a working-class movement. Rather, it was a cross-section of white Protestant society whose defining features were ethnic nationalism and right-wing populism—an attempt to "take back" society from racially impure and culturally inferior "aliens."[77] Although shaped by longstanding patterns of racial aversion, including the inequality and scarcity consciousness that often drove working-class racism, the Klan was also a direct recoil against communism and, especially in Little Egypt, radical unionism.[78] Klan composition varied by locale, yet urban membership skewed toward business owners and white-collar professionals, often overlapping with the American Legion and the National Association of Manufacturers.[79] Anti-Klan elites may have labeled the so-called Invisible Empire a rabble of "Bolsheviks," and some leading Klansmen, such as editor Charles Ingraham of Herrin, were indeed former socialists.[80] But Klan politics were generally anti-union and staunchly anticommunist—its hierarchy was not only white over Black and Protestant over Catholic but owner over worker. Indeed, businessmen and law

enforcement had always been disproportionately represented in the region's anti-Black paramilitaries, and that remained the case as Klaverns sprung up in the mining towns of Murphysboro, West Frankfort, and McLeansboro, Illinois, and Linton and Sullivan, Indiana, where union miners were more likely to be Klan targets than participants.[81]

White hoods obscured faces and identities, but the Klan's class makeup was no secret. At massive torch-lit processions in "the center of southern Illinois Klandom," such as that in Carterville in June 1923, fretful observers recognized political candidates and prominent ministers from Carbondale, Marion, and Johnston City.[82] West Frankfort native Linda Lee Ream, whose father was likely a Klansman, later recalled the Klan's bourgeois nature, including alcohol prohibition demonstrations led by marchers with perfectly polished shoes.[83] More "respectable" Klan activity, meanwhile, took shape through public forums and "law and order" meetings where, despite the absence of robes and hoods and the participation of non-Klansmen, members furthered group aims through politically legitimate channels.[84] Though one reporter acknowledged that some unionists and various other workers had joined the ranks of the "Koo Koos" out of "racial or religious prejudice," the Klan in southern Illinois was, above all, "a business organization." Operating under the pretense of legality, its most influential members were "community leaders" whose notions of "justice" involved controlling and disciplining workers and commanding local markets.[85]

By 1922, the Klan had become, according to historian John Laslett, "the dominant social institution in many of Little Egypt's poverty-stricken coal towns."[86] This was especially the case in Williamson County, the site of the Herrin Massacre, which one observer termed "the ideal Klux empire," comprised the community's "best people," with key members including preachers, bankers, doctors, lawyers, insurance agents, and the city's most successful merchants.[87] There, violence between pro and anti-Klan factions pitted Protestant elites against working-class immigrants and led to the emergence of the notorious bootlegging outfits of Charlie Birger and the Shelton gang.[88] Combining crime discourse with anti-Catholicism and Anglo-Saxon racial theory, in 1923, a cadre of Klansmen and Protestant ministers backed the sheriff campaign of former Federal Prohibition Agent S. Glenn Young, whose "Law and Order" campaign sought stricter enforcement of the Eighteenth Amendment and greater policing of African Americans and immigrant miners.[89] Rooted in religious, ethnic, and class tension, sub-conflicts between "dry" (temperance) and "wet" (anti-temperance) factions facilitated a series of sometimes

lethal raids and counter-raids, leading Governor Lennington Small to intervene with state troops.[90]

The merger of Klansmen with the Anti-Saloon League to form the Williamson County Law Enforcement League, which effectively became the policing arm of the Invisible Empire, constituted a tipping point.[91] Klansmen soon founded the *Herrin Herald* as their public-facing mouthpiece, augmenting the region's reputation as "a great Ku Klux stronghold."[92] None of its known investors were miners.[93] Led by a grassroots vanguard of Communists and other radicals, unionists increasingly regarded Klansmen, private guards, local police, and mine owners—"KKK hoods, tin badges, and khaki uniforms"—as unalloyed representatives of the ruling class. "If there are any who still doubt that the Klan is a business organization," Thomas Myerscough argued in the *Daily Worker*, "they should be treated to an examination by a competent phrenologist."[94]

In contrast to the bourgeois Klan, anti-Klan resistance was multiethnic and often rooted in worker institutions. The most vigorous Klan opposition came from the protest and boycott movements of Catholic immigrant and African American communities, as well as from labor-oriented groups that organized grassroots noncompliance from Steubenville, Ohio, to Murphysboro, Illinois, known widely as Red Knights or the Knights of the Flaming Circle.[95] Contrasting themselves with the pro-business Klan, the Knights trumpeted absolute support for unions in their declaration of principles, denounced the Hooded Order as part of the open-shop movement, and reportedly refused membership to anyone they viewed as hostile to organized labor.[96] Knights in Williamson County were led by Ora Thomas, who had been an investigator for the Herrin massacre defendants.[97] Various other reformers, including socialists like McAllister Coleman, assistant editor of the *Illinois Miner*, also embraced the anti-Klan crusade.[98] Communists, however, soon proved to be the Hooded Order's most strident adversaries on the labor left. As Workers Party organizer Max Shachtman declared, in southern Illinois a man was "either with the miners who are fighting for their rights, or else he is a Klansman, a company tool, or a cog in the reactionary union machine."[99]

The ostracism of revolutionary miners and the role of union bosses in placating the Klan and selling out Communists seemed to validate Shachtman's point. An array of pro-labor voices urged Protestant, native-born miners to disavow or disassociate from the Klan, but the response of union officialdom to the Klan crisis proved slow, its ultimate anti-Klan measures—blunted versions of Communists' sharper proposals—lax and unenforced.[100] According

to historian Benjamin Schmack, in defanging Communist resolutions, "the hierarchy of organized labor in Illinois could 'condemn' the Klan without losing members or truly provoking the powerful hooded organization."[101] Indeed, many union officials were less concerned about white supremacists than the growing red element within their ranks. Increasingly, Communists leveled charges of corruption, fraud, and frame-up against subdistrict representatives, accusing them of conspiring with Klansmen and coal operators to sabotage labor's left flank. In Zeigler, for instance, Communists accused AFL leaders of hiring the Klan to intimidate left-wing miners. Twenty union miners, including the tenacious anti-Klan Communist Henry Corbishley, president of the ethnically diverse UMW Local 992 and close ally of William Z. Foster, were expelled from the union and indicted for crimes that many locals attributed to the Invisible Empire. The *Labor Defender* referred to the incident as a "conspiracy" between mine owners and local Klansmen and their allies in local politics, who rationalized the persecution of union miners because they were "dirty foreigners" and "abominable Bolsheviks."[102] This growing distrust—between leftists and conservatives, rank and file and administration, and local community and state and national leadership—presaged the forthcoming dual union movement.

Writing on Little Egypt's Klan in *The New Republic*, labor activist Agnes Burns Wieck described her home as being torn apart by "warring factions": Klan and anti-Klan, wet and dry, Protestant native and foreign-born Catholic. She lamented murder and terrorism in a community of "one hundred percent unionism, a community where for twenty-five years native and foreigner have stood together in industrial struggle and so often died together in disaster," and contemplated how that relationship could be "severed with such hatred and violence." For Wieck, who had been passionately committed to the miners' cause since 1916, when she delivered a speech to Illinois miners as a member of the Women's Trade Union League, the answer lay in a resurgence of "deep-rooted prejudices" tied to migration, poverty, culture, and borders.

"The Ku Klux mind has always dominated this section of the country," she argued, as impoverished southerners, subsisting on pork and corn, had moved to southern Illinois to escape the slave system while retaining considerable animus against Black "competitors." Upland whites remained spirited and generous but poor, exploited, suspicious of outsiders, superstitious in their religion, and, according to Wieck, susceptible to its manipulations. "The wealth of coal" had turned these agrarians into industrial workers, she explained, and unionization bred "a new philosophy of life" through shared

"brotherhood, regardless of race, creed, or color." Now Prohibition, the "Americanism" movement, and the rise of overt white supremacy, goaded by affluent bankers and merchants of "old settler stock," threatened to undo decades of solidarity work. Only a more assertive miners' movement could turn the tide of elite-led Ku Kluxism.[103]

Such change was not imminent within the UMW. In fact, by 1924, Indiana boasted more Klansmen than any other state, and rabid Hooded Order organizers had descended on the coal fields. Pinpointing "new immigrants" and "government paternalism" as the true sources of proletarian hardship, Klaverns simultaneously appealed to the business class through a discourse of property rights, anticommunism, and "individual initiative." D. C. Stephenson's open letter "To All Manufacturers in the State of Indiana," for example, outlined the Klan's program as able to capture working-class support by offering racial and ethnic nationalism as an alternative to socialism and its "foreign" internationalism. Klansmen even attempted to transcend their bourgeois substratum by appropriating local Labor Day celebrations, which brought significant pro-labor resistance.

Evansville union leaders recognized the urgency, and a UMW convention in Indianapolis fostered bitter debate over a proposed measure permitting unionists to join the Invisible Empire. The drive to sanction Klan membership originated in southern Indiana, where unionists had sent the UMW state constitution committee more than thirty resolutions lauding Klan principles, particularly immigration restriction, as beneficial to organized labor. Ultimately, the statute failed, and most union leaders denounced Klan activity as a violation of the union's inclusionary precepts. However, diggers in Evansville, Linton, and Fort Branch protested the restriction.[104]

Meanwhile, Klan-like notions of "law and order" permeated labor battles in other industries. Avowing that Black workers would not denigrate their communities or depress their wages, white citizens rioted against "imported" African Americans in Elco, in Alexander County, in the winter of 1924 and in Mound City that summer. These were followed by several near-lynchings, the largest being a reported mob of five hundred, led by local Klansmen, which prompted the governor to call in the state militia.[105] In nearby Cobden, vigilantes threatened to torch the homesteads of white farmers who recruited (presumably lower-paid) Black employees and warned African American migrants to leave the county or risk being "blown to hell with guns and dynamite."[106] When unionized fluorspar diggers in Hardin County walked out in the fall of 1921, workers warned against enrolling "company gunmen" and

"foreign" replacements. Predictably, bloody altercations occurred after mine company police attempted to forcefully remove union families in the name of preventing "disorder."[107] And when workingmen struck at a railroad tie manufacturer downriver in Massac County, white residents dropped leaflets from an airplane warning African American strikebreakers that they had twenty-four hours to vacate the county or risk being bombed.[108]

Despite outward—if insufficient and weak-willed—resistance from UMW and AFL officials, many of whom viewed Klansmen and Communists as comparable threats, pro-Klan politicians continued to garner considerable white working-class support throughout the borderland. The fall 1924 elections saw some of Evansville's most heavily working-class and traditionally Democratic wards split between pro-Klan Republicans and anti-Klan Democrats and Progressives. The following year, Klan-aligned candidates, led by Republican mayor Herbert Males, won nearly every elected office and council seat. The "first northern city to join the Invisible Empire" had become a bona fide Klan nerve center, inflamed by a perfect storm of anticommunism, African American migration, anti-Germanism, and recrudescent waves of moral panic common among river cities.[109] Although, according to historian Samuel W. White, the Klan in Evansville "failed to consolidate a durable constituency among workers in the city," and its presence quickly faded, the intraclass division it exposed and sowed contributed mightily to the general retreat of organized labor during this "golden age" of capital speculation and deregulation.[110]

UNION VULNERABILITY AND THE MISSTEPS of labor officials opened the door for more revolutionary unionism. Open-shop campaigns and a conservative political climate, combined with John L. Lewis's expulsions of union dissidents in the face of declining membership, led by decade's end to the emergence of independent dual unions, including the National Miners Union, organized in the spring of 1928 and soon affiliated with the Trade Union Unity League. An appendage of "Third Period" Communism, in which party theorists argued that the capitalist recovery and soundness of the 1920s was now destabilizing, and would lead to renewed class conflict across the globe, the NMU was internationalist in outlook, supportive of workers across industries, and opposed to both capitalist parties.[111] In the words of Workers Party of America presidential candidate William Z. Foster, the red union looked to forge a "united front" of miners to promote nationalization, organize the

unorganized, and "Save the Union" from the so-called Lewis machine, which had slowly curbed local autonomy by monopolizing the power to bargain collectively within the national office.[112]

Although its numbers would remain relatively small, the NMU's emergence spoke to broader fissures within Lewis's union, with many miners welcoming an alternative to what they deemed a corrupt, overly reformist UMW officialdom. NMU leaders were Communist Party members, but the organization proved mostly non-revolutionary in its goals, with advocates focusing on bread-and-butter issues over international proletarian rebellion and viewing themselves squarely within the region's "militant protest tradition."[113] To that end, the NMU condemned UMW bureaucrats for persecuting radical unionists, colluding with coal operators, packing conventions, acquiescing to labor-displacing machinery, and failing to organize large swaths of the South, which allowed owners to utilize "cheap" coal and labor as strikebreaking tools.[114] Accusing "Lewis henchmen" of fomenting "anti-foreign hysteria" and threatening to deport militants, National Miners also looked to soften the valence of border-related restrictions, removals, and "invasion" fears through greater incorporation and more comprehensive conceptions of comradeship and class struggle.[115]

The National Miners made perhaps their greatest and most lasting contribution to the miners' travail by adopting the Communists' antiracism. Highlighting the persistence of white supremacy under Lewis's watch, Foster and others underscored "the vast importance of work" among specific "sections of the working class," particularly women, youths, and African Americans.[116] The NMU in fact promised to "organize all Negro miners and draw them into full participation and co-leadership."[117] This strategic defiance of the color line, known as the "miner's formula," involved actively recruiting Black workers and appointing Black officers, addressing racism within the ranks, and reaching out to strikebreakers by appealing to their direct interests rather than demonizing them.[118] The program also transcended mere racial inclusion by encompassing opposition to racial discrimination and anti-Black violence beyond the workplace—in laws and social customs and in residential and commercial spaces such as hotels, theaters, and restaurants. The NMU's publication, *The Coal Digger*, likewise emphasized the diversity of its contributors and echoed Foster's call for race and gender-specific demands and greater minority representation.[119] The upstart union was, in the words of African American party spokesman James W. Ford, "committed to the principle of equality and equal conditions for Negro workers" through opposition

to segregation, lynching, and racial banishment. According to Ford, such a platform was especially germane in southern Illinois because the region had long been the site of "bloody class battles" in which negrophobia proved a cudgel, a fulcrum, and a bogeyman.[120]

The NMU's relatively sophisticated analysis of the symbiotic relationship between racism and capitalism won the praise of W. E. B. Du Bois, who urged African American leaders to rally around the new union.[121] It also stood in sharp contrast to the conservative racial theories of Marcus Garvey, whom Harry Haywood and other Black socialists accused of kowtowing to white capitalists, making unholy alliances with the Klan, and undermining Black workers by casting them "permanently into the role of strikebreakers."[122] In contrast to Garveyite separatism and accommodation, the NMU's racial justice commitments—against colonialism abroad and Jim Crow at home—stemmed from the belief that African American workers possessed a unique revolutionary potential within an interracial workers movement because they constituted "the most exploited section of the proletariat." National Miners held that the relatively low status of Black workers, who did not "share in the miserable bribes with which imperialism poisons the upper section of the working class," disinclined them toward institutional hierarchies and labor patriotism, making them more amenable toward a broadly democratic and internationalist viewpoint. The key to linking workers across the color line lay not in non-discrimination but in comprehensive antiracism as a matter of self-interest. As the *Daily Worker* explained, "Our aim must be to show to the white workers that only by complete solidarity of the races can any progress be made by either."[123]

This outward-looking commitment to resisting unjust laws, policies, and attitudes brought with it an alternative cultural politics rooted in revolutionary socialist traditions. For the first time, tens of thousands of white union miners in the borderland were exposed to the notion that white supremacy existed within a global colonial framework. Communists saw Little Egypt as a model of "one hundred percent organization," establishing revolutionary "nuclei" in mining towns like Collinsville and Eldorado.[124] There, they embraced a militancy that made many UMW lieutenants squeamish. For example, although United Miners celebrated "Virden Day" every October 13, NMU memory work embraced the "Virden tradition" of righteous violence against mine guards and, if necessary, armed strikebreakers.[125]

Left-wing miners also mourned the loss of the Soviet head of state in 1924 by hosting Lenin Memorial Meetings in West Frankfort, Christopher, John-

Figure 10. "A Black Communist Gives a Speech in Front of a Crowd of Roughly 1,800 Workers in Terre Haute, Indiana, August, 1931." Although a grainy capture of a remarkable political moment, Ora Boyce's likeness in a nationally circulated, albeit Communist, newspaper. *The Daily Worker*, represented a rare instance of popular political visibility for a working-class Black woman.

ston City, East St. Louis, and Zeigler, where Max Shachtman led the public services.[126] In Staunton, six hundred colliers and their families attended a rally against imperialism. Communists, including future New York congressional candidate Louise Morrison, spoke on developments in the Soviet Union and the position of U.S. miners in an international war against capital.[127] Elsewhere, NMU representatives encouraged striking miners to demand unemployment insurance, a six-hour workday, and "full social, industrial, and political equality for Negro workers against Jim Crowism."[128] Many of these NMU cultural politics centered on Black history and Black workers, including Black women. Ora Boyce, for example, spoke publicly on everything from Nat Turner to the role of women in the southern Illinois miners' struggle (Figure 10).[129]

The UMW responded to the threat of dual unionism in District 12 with expected alarm. At the Indianapolis constitutional convention in March 1930, officials accused subdistrict leaders in Franklin County, the largest coal-producing county in the state, which now boasted more than four thousand NMU members, of facilitating the union exodus through bribery, election fraud, and blacklisting. Deeming the NMU a "reign of terror," Lewis ripped up a

copy of the rival news publication, the *Illinois Miner*, calling it an "infamous" rag and charging editor Oscar Ameringer with thievery. Delegates followed suit, with one slandering Ameringer, who had waged an editorial war against the Klan in Oklahoma as "an enemy to organized labor." Another censured labor crusader Agnes Burns Wieck and her "slanderous" anti-Lewis articles.[130] Yet the average NMU activist was less a subversive Bolshevik than a homegrown radical motivated by local problems and highly attuned to regional issues, the problem of the color line in the borderland among them.[131] Indeed, Lewis's fight against the NMU was a struggle not only for self-preservation but also over the guiding philosophies of miner organization, including theories surrounding racial justice and inclusion.

All the while, United Miner supremacy was perhaps safer than Lewis knew. From its very inception, the red union had faced particular hostility from employers, courts, and the press, who sometimes found themselves, often paradoxically, aligned with the Lewis faction. The NMU made headway in areas where the UMW was patently corrupt or relatively weak, but a confluence of oppositional forces kept it small and sectarian. The National Miners also suffered from internal debacles. Communist Party upheavals in 1928, and Stalin's directive to cease collaboration with "social fascists," resulted in membership declines, and the Illinois NMU strike of 1929 ended with a whimper. Owners broke the NMU's call for a general strike on January 1, 1932, and, with unionists blacklisted by recalcitrant operators, state officials, and UMW bureaucrats, the revolutionary union soon became a paper organization. A string of defeats and shifts in party strategy, the move toward the Popular Front and once again "boring within" the United Miners, led to the NMU's swift decline and ultimate dissolution in 1935.[132]

However, a group of insurgent miners out of southern Illinois, some former Communists, soon offered another alternative vision of industrial unionism. Founded in September 1932 in Macoupin County, the Progressive Miners of America (PMA) sought a more localized and militant option to the "corrupt officialdom" of the UMW.[133] This left-wing offensive arose from a series of governance and wage reduction disputes between the increasingly autocratic Lewis and the union's subdistricts—Lewis and District 12 President John H. Walker had forced a contract that Illinois miners had rejected four to one. In addition to advocating basic workplace improvements such as the six-hour day and unemployment insurance for out-of-work miners, the PMA rejected Lewis and UMW leadership as too embedded within Democratic machine politics and being overly cooperative with mine owners. These renegade

workmen, whose numbers soon swelled into the tens of thousands, sought a more democratic, community-based unionism less beholden to "fakers" and far-off bureaucrats.[134]

Although both pursued a wall-to-wall membership, the egalitarian reach of the PMA model exceeded that of the UMW. The more class-confrontational Progressives espoused an international outlook, pay equality between leadership and rank-and-file members, and militant and independent working-class political action.[135] Founding leaders, such as the French-born miner and socialist Gerry Allard of West Frankfort, also advocated greater inclusivity according to race, gender, and "skill" that would not only receive women and Black workers but also ostensibly liberate white workers from the toxin of racial supremacy. The Progressive constitution expressed this desire to both end "the old practice of race discrimination" and unite with Black miners and women both politically and industrially.[136] Nationally, leftists praised initial Progressive agitation for its willingness to push back against miner "traditions" that excluded or subordinated Black diggers and women, and many PMA locals aligned with anti-UMW "red unions," including the National Miners Union.[137] The Communist Party's *Daily Worker* extolled "the fighting miners of southern Illinois" for identifying their true class enemies: conservative AFL bureaucrats, the mine-employed private armies of "imported gun-toting gangsters from Chicago," and, above all, the owners who maintained power by fanning the flames of prejudice.[138]

Progressives even organized a Women's Auxiliary of Progressive Miners that fought for greater gender equality, as well as free school lunch, textbook, and transport programs and an end to racial and ethnic discrimination in Illinois public schools.[139] As historian Caroline Waldron Merithew argues, the Women's Auxiliary soon proved "one of the few movements in which non-wage-earning women became leaders in organizing an industry that employed only male labor."[140] Reminding constituents that the United States had been "born in revolution," the PMA's most radical members tapped into the left nationalism of the nation's past while also defiantly flying the red flag of future revolution.[141] An aging miner living in Wilsonville, Illinois, observed that PMA militancy reminded him of direct action during the old class struggles in his native France. "They called us 'Brouchoutists,'" he explained. "They call you 'Bolsheviks.' We fought conservatives then . . . you fight them now."[142]

The Progressive movement's goal of a racially encompassing, grassroots democratic industrial unionism proved a countervailing force in a region where white nationalism, and oftentimes white exclusivity, had long dom-

inated. Progressive locals endorsed the rights of African American miners to work all jobs, hold any position, and live in any housing quarter on equal terms with white miners.[143] The PMA left wing, meanwhile, sought to amplify the voices of unemployed and Black miners through a "program of demands" specific to their conditions, incorporating internationalist and anti-imperialist perspectives. Members acknowledged the fraught history of race-based scarcity fears and labor division in Little Egypt and slandered both mine owners and UMW officials for fostering anti-Black prejudice. PMA socialists, in particular, endorsed a full-scale confrontation with "Jim Crowism and segregation of the Negro people."[144] Attempting to appeal to white workers, Progressive propagandists described the "Ku Klux Klan" not merely as an instrument of anti-Black, anti-Semitic, and xenophobic terror but as a class design, synonymous with the arbitrary power of kings, capitalists, and fascists.[145]

Women activists played an outsized role in the PMA, largely through the Women's Auxiliary, which functioned as a diverse and independent activist organization headed by firebrand Agnes Burns Wieck. Inspired toward socialism after meeting Eugene Debs decades before, Wieck worked as a reporter for the *Harrisburg Chronicle* then trained as a labor organizer through the Women's Trade Union League. The Women's Auxiliary was not traditionally feminist; it fought for miners' issues, such as unemployment insurance, rather than "women's issues." Yet, as militantly working-class women, Wieck and her followers were doubly hated by the bosses. In some instances, law enforcement and community leaders sympathetic to the Lewis faction intimidated them, forbade them from meeting, or drove them from town. Such repression was especially intense in Franklin and Christian counties. Even so, the Women's Auxiliary grew alongside the PMA, drawing on liberationist traditions dating back to the Civil War. They employed the memory of Abraham Lincoln and emancipation at their largest rally, in Springfield in January 1933, as the idea of a long antislavery struggle permeated their organizational culture. Sung to the tunes of "Marching Through Georgia," "The Battle Cry of Freedom," and "John Brown's Body," organizational anthems by Lillian Burnette and Nannie Parker quoted Marx and Engels while depicting Lewis as partner of Peabody Coal colluding against the rank and file.[146]

Such inclusive cultural politics could not prevent rival industrial unionism from devolving into factionalism, political backbiting, and, eventually, miner-on-miner bloodshed. The far more powerful UMW lobby sought to blunt PMA growth through legal channels, and the National Labor Relations Board eventually ruled against the Progressives in 1934. On the ground, PMA mem-

bers accused both mine owners and Lewis of suppression through red-baiting and xenophobia.[147] Fueled by red scare and "anti-foreigner hysteria," inter-union conflict created what one Progressive described as a "hell on earth" of fratricidal brutality marked by assassinations, bombings, home invasions, beatings, and locked and loaded stand-offs.[148]

Armed struggle ensued around the Peabody Mine 43 near Harrisburg in the fall of 1933 as five hundred machine-gun toting Progressive picketers dynamited railroad bridges, blew up a UMW residence hotel in nearby Eldorado, and laid siege to the mine to halt production, prompting the governor to summon the state militia.[149] PMA strike centers, including Taylorville, Belleville, and Gillespie, also became sites of carnage between Progressives and the "Lewis machine," with National Guardsmen often intervening. Some of the deadliest hostilities occurred in Franklin County, the coal-producing behemoth and site of the famed Orient mines, where Communist miners described collusion between UMW officials, mine owners, and local authorities as "American fascism."[150]

At the same time, militants and moderates, foreign and native-born, Communists and socialists, and executives and rank-and-file members battled within the PMA. While lauding their attempt to break the Lewis stranglehold, the *Daily Worker* nevertheless accused Progressive leaders, especially Socialist Party members and "counterrevolutionary" Trotskyite party defectors like Gerry Allard, of naked opportunism; others, they claimed, stood guilty of persecuting their left-wing opponents.[151] Communist women declared Agnes Burns Wieck a "social-fascist."[152] Inside the PMA, dissenters and breakaway factions charged officials with parroting the corruption and reformist tactics of "Lewis thugs."[153] Anti-Progressive forces exploited these divisions. The *New York Times* reported that such disagreements were more than purely economic and often involved "the old racial disorder" that had long characterized worker-on-worker violence and labor fragmentation in "South Illinois," where "native-born" toilers were assumed to be both English-speaking and white.[154]

At the state level, the Illinois House of Representatives moved to investigate Communist activities among PMA miners, and left-leaning members were slowly red-baited out of the organization as local after local returned to the UMW. Despite several shifts in strategy, including affiliating with the American Federation of Labor from 1937 to 1946, the institutional muscle of the UMW and unfavorable rulings by the National Labor Relations Board helped sink the PMA and other alternate left-wing unions. In time, the Pro-

gressives, like the National Miners Union and, eventually, the Communist Party itself, were battered into relative obscurity.

Although the NMU and PMA mutinies were short-lived, their very existence seemed to push the UMW in progressive directions.[155] The UMW adopted elements of the National Miner blueprint of interracial activism, placing African American unionists into local leadership. As more and more southern-born Blacks migrated to northern coal fields, changing the racial makeup of areas such as southern Illinois and Indiana that were "unused to extensive interracial interaction," union leaders were compelled to further integrate or risk an increase of competitors who also happened to be non-white.[156] UMW membership soared throughout the mid-1930s as Lewis's Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) moved into previously unorganized sectors of mass production, where "unskilled" minority workers were disproportionate and left-wing influence was commonplace, particularly in the steel and coal-heavy states of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. To that end, the CIO organizers, many of them Communists, embraced the "miner's formula" of hiring Black organizers and making alliances with civil rights groups, including the NAACP and the Urban League.[157] The popularly perceived threat of Black strikebreakers waned accordingly. In a reversal of tired regional stereotypes and a signal of the UMW-CIO divorce after 1940, Martin Wagner, a former southern Illinois miner, cast the only dissenting vote when Phillip Murray, a staunch civil rights advocate who established the CIO's Committee to Abolish Racial Discrimination, was ousted as vice president of the UMW.[158]

The New Deal did not temper worker demands so much as invigorate them, as CIO assaults on Jim Crow radiated beyond the mines, constituting a high-water mark in American labor militancy. Moreover, the Great Depression saw a reduction in the out-migration of southern Blacks that stabilized the labor force, reduced market splits, and alleviated white-on-Black labor conflict.[159] New Deal policy, particularly the National Industrial Recovery Act and the Bituminous Coal Code, empowered labor at the exact moment that miners' unions were adopting new approaches to racial inclusion, stimulating cooperation across the color line. In Cairo, more than one hundred unionized Black dock workers of the Marine Workers Industrial Union struck against their employer, the Federal Barge Line, in the fall of 1933. The strikers received the support of their white union comrades despite the use of local "hoodlum white deputies" and white strikebreakers. In fact, the company's utilization of white "scabs" to break a walkout by Black unionized workers represented an inversion of the region's racial-labor tropes—what

strike supporters recognized as "negro and white solidarity" defied the specter of the "negro scab."[160]

Observing Black and white miners walk out together in Sparta and other parts of southwestern Illinois, the *Daily Worker* optimistically prophesied a "maturing general mass struggle" in the region that might result in "a Southern Illinois nucleus" of Bolshevik cadres. Little Egypt was ripe for such radicalization, the editor predicted, because of class inequality and "all the decaying imperialism." Nowhere were racialized replacement fears more tried and true than along the sectional border. Nowhere was interracial working-class politics more critical.[161]

Yet the "white problem" proved tenacious. Radical unionists recognized persistent racism and segregation in working-class communities as a continuous obstacle and race-based fearmongering as evidence that "the white slave master" was alive and well. Consistent with the Communist Party's newfangled "Americanization" campaign, which portrayed Marxism as patriotic and harmonious with domestic political traditions, General Secretary Earl Browder related the Great Emancipator's "heritage to the American people" in February 1936.[162] Standing in Lincoln's symbolic and literal shadow and drawing on the history of violence in the Illinois coal fields, he framed racism, "the instrument through which the boss tried to break strikes, to pit one section of the population against another," as toxic to working-class advancement.

"We can only win," Browder made clear, "if white workers will support the Negro People."[163] Although the CIO provided a vehicle for them to do just that, what Du Bois called "the leading organization in the struggle for Black freedom" also emboldened cross-class backlash and proved susceptible to not only owner subversion but also internal sabotage.[164] "Hate strikes" against Black laborers erupted in Cincinnati, where industrialists failed to comply with new federal fair hiring practices. Key CIO officials in Louisville remained "steeped in the traditions of the Old South so far as Negroes are concerned." In Evansville's UAW-CIO Chrysler plant, where African Americans served as officers and were trained as machinists, some rank-and-file members, particularly those from Kentucky, remained outwardly hostile to racial inclusion.[165]

In some sense, the critical moment had already passed. The immediate postwar years saw unprecedented union density but also declining labor militancy, rampant discrimination in jobs and housing, and the slow unraveling of the New Deal coalition. In Evansville, where the CIO boasted more than fifteen thousand members and roughly 60 percent of the total labor force was

organized, "popular anticommunism," often linked to civil rights opposition, drove a wedge between the city's unions.[166] Evansville's largest union, Local 813 of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, which had been one of the first to affiliate with the CIO and endorse Henry Wallace's Progressive Party ticket in 1948, was deemed a "red menace" by both owners and segregationists. Wallace's campaign stop in the city that April bordered on pandemonium, as civic officials, businessmen, and veterans' organizations first blocked Paul Robeson from attending, then held an opposition parade and attacked Progressives in what became known as the "Wallace riot."

With the backing of the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the city council soon passed a resolution making it illegal for Communists to live or work in Evansville. This position increasingly squared with those of labor officials, including Walter Reuther, who delivered a speech promoting labor patriotism when he visited the city in 1954. As with white racial solidarity around Black exclusion in the nineteenth century, anticommunism decentered material issues and workerist identities, reorienting them around language, religion, and ethnicity rather than productive relations. In the borderland and elsewhere, red scare undermined what was perhaps the last best hope for a social democratic coalition against the rising Cold War consensus.[167]

The conservative tide compelled activists to scale down, and sometimes reframe, the aims and meaning of labor and civil rights. As bipartisan reaction threatened to uncouple economic from racial radicalism, Black urban populations in the borderland rose dramatically during the 1940s and 50s, as interracial labor mobilization—remarkable, if imperfect—helped lay the foundation for the Freedom Movement in the Ohio Valley.[168] Although the Second World War further legitimized unions and their leadership, the end of wartime bargaining power among workers and the rightward turn in national politics, embodied by the Taft-Hartley Act, slowly reinvigorated the relative position of capital.[169] While Operation Dixie floundered in the South, the UMW remained outside the stagnant CIO and estranged from the more dominant and conservative AFL. And though society as a whole made momentous strides toward racial integration after 1954 and *Brown v. the Board of Education*, national unionization peaked that year. The future of U.S. labor in the region and the nation suddenly lay not in radical unionism, or even in breaking new ground, but in hanging on for dear life. Labor's anticommunist purges and de-emphasis on redistributive policies—and the failure of the borderland's largest and most interracial industry to remain within

an umbrella organization led by anti-capitalists and committed to antiracist principles—further severed what Peter Clark, Willing Hands, and Ora Boyce had all understood as the essential interdependence of racial justice and economic democracy.[170]

EPILOGUE

The Present State

> Who has done the most dying? Most of the work? Most of the time in prison? Who is the hindmost in every aspect of social, political, and economic life? Who has the least short-term interest—or no interest at all—in the survival of the present state?
>
> — GEORGE JACKSON, BLACK GUERRILLA FAMILY

It was supposed to be a carefree pilgrimage.[1] Backdropped by economic boom and the triumphant end of a world war, David Thoreau Wieck and Diva Agnostinelli, the son and daughter-in-law of famed labor activist Agnes Burns Wieck, journeyed to Little Egypt, one decade before investigative journalist Fletcher Martin's scathing exposé on the Lower Midwest's "tradition of racial separatism." Wieck was seldom in, much less of, those region-specific exclusionary customs. Born in St. Louis to southern Illinoisans but raised in Manhattan, he was a red diaper child who grew into a "dissident Bolshevik," as well as a conscientious objector. When he arrived in Williamson County in 1947, he was fresh off a prison stint for refusing induction into the Jim Crow U.S. Army. Now, he hoped to reconnect with his family roots. The locale he and Agnostinelli discovered, however, was no longer the fertile terrain for working-class radicalism that his firebrand parents had known. The labor militancy of the previous generation had been undercut by internal schism, growing union accommodationism, and a national political Thermidor.

Agnostinelli, the daughter of anarchist coal miners in Pennsylvania, identified in Johnston City an inward and almost regressive working-class culture—one battered by decades of conflict with owners, imbued with ideolo-

gies of capital and whiteness, neutered by red scare, and beholden to union officials inclined toward labor patriotism and bureaucratic compromise over militant confrontation. A decade earlier, Agnostinelli's mother-in-law had participated in the nation's most aggressive labor wars in which southern Illinois miners fought either as or alongside Communists. Now, the younger woman was surprised to discover that working-class Egyptians tended to be localist and suspicious of outsiders and, in a most ironic turn, their "more American" sensibilities portended the high-water mark of anticommunism.

The community was also more "land conscious" and nationalistic than Agnostinelli had expected. She portrayed a people deeply attached to agrarian traditions—wage earners with the land-fixated sensibilities of farmers—that possessed a surprising racial and ethnic homogeneity, in sharp contrast to the more "cosmopolitan" proletarian culture she had experienced in her youth. Although the region's white workers possessed an understandable skepticism toward government and corporate "control," she suspected they might also "fall for nationalism and the Ku Klux Klan ideas of 100% Americanism." In sum, Wieck and Agnostinelli depicted not an international-looking proletariat but a provincial class highly susceptible to the forces of political reaction, especially concerning race. "I have to admit," Wieck confessed of the racially prohibitive region that Fletcher Martin would soon encounter, "I don't really understand those people down there."[2]

Trying to understand his mother's home region and its sudden rejection of labor radicalism became a lifelong interest for Wieck. In his 1992 biography of his mother, Wieck found that Little Egypt contained a proud, if shrinking, union legacy but little of the broad egalitarian spirit that had once characterized socialists in Harrisburg, Italian-American anarchists in Herrin, and Black Communists in Du Quoin. The combined effects of the Herrin Massacre, Ku Klux Klan terror, Prohibition gang warfare, and the collapse of anti-capitalist miner agitation and organization had left Williamson County, in Wieck's words, "nearly indistinguishable from any other poor and culturally backward county."[3]

In southern Illinois, Wieck observed a familiar, if heightened, story that was endemic to inequality and labor discipline under capitalism: the powerful promoting and harnessing racial panic, and the relatively powerless attempting to construct restrictive boundaries of custom atop political ones, often brutalizing others they deem a threat to their ever-precarious existence. Above all, the story of his mother's region was one of working people, victims and perpetrators, both enduring and responding to exploitation and racialization.

Indeed, Little Egypt's workers created their own cultures of supremacy and violence, but many also attempted to overcome this catastrophic cycle, not through starry-eyed utopianism, but, in its greatest effect, through organizing on the basis of shared material interests.

Achieving class or trade-based comity among the races was a radical act, one potent enough to win greater incremental and sometimes lasting power within certain industries. In the Lower Midwest during the long nineteenth century, workers often achieved or sustained these victories by accommodating the prerogatives of bosses, bourgeois parties, and capitalist warmakers, as well as the wider social oppression and subordination of other working people. However, privileging union security over comprehensiveness proved insufficient to break the power of the color line, never mind the social valency of race or the domination of the ownership class. As the gains of the 1930s suggested, that victory would require a more invigorated and coherent type of mass class-based politics, born and cultivated through even broader worker incorporation, and evolved from basic self-regard into an advanced consciousness of solidarity. Forged through the fires of collective struggle, such an approach risked alienating some workers in the short term, but, in the long term, it offered perhaps the only means toward a permanent alternative to a crushing present. As union radicals recognized, the key was to redirect the understandable interpersonal anger produced by capitalism toward those who privately expropriate socially created wealth and, ultimately, against the system itself.

In the end, the potential for a revolution in the racial system died with the end of aspirations for working-class revolution. Like the rest of the nation, the borderland slowly overcame the so-called nadir of U.S. race relations, owing largely to the labor-civil rights alliance that grew out of the 1930s. Still, interracial industrial unionism in single industries could not always prevent racial and ethnic division within coal mining towns, much less transform the race-class dynamics of an entire region.[4] Labor editors, including the wilting Communist press, which by the 1950s employed local Abraham Lincoln Brigade veterans in membership drives in desperate appeals to a fading left-wing nostalgia, also noted the precipitous wane in labor militancy. Miners in Little Egypt had once been among the most radicalized workers in the Midwest, boasting a "long tradition of struggle for democracy." But progressivism in the coalfields went dormant as New Deal radicalism dissipated, anticommunism took root, and the UMW left the CIO for the more conservative AFL, isolating it from the industrial union movement.[5]

As always, racial violence facilitated declining labor audacity. In the summer of 1946, white sheriff's deputies in Madison County, Illinois, nearly killed a young, unarmed African American, Lucian J. Hopkins, when they beat him with blackjacks. Although Black citizens and trade unionists organized a rally to protest the "Klan-like" pummeling, the incident produced a gnawing sense of familiarity, confirming the bottled up sentiment that anti-civil rights violence, rather than a sectional feature confined to the Deep South, was also historically and structurally embedded in the borderland. "Illinois must not become a Mississippi of the North," the Black Communist William L. Patterson warned.[6] His words proved somewhat prescient, as Cairo's freedom struggle during the 1960s revealed similarities between the borderland and the Deep South. Elsewhere, small towns continued to exhibit violence not merely of exploitation, residential segregation, and economic and political domination, but of exclusion. The borderland could never become Mississippi. A century of commitments to free white labor had made it something else entirely.

Still, anti-Black and anti-worker violence, often one and the same, bound the borderland to other regions and to the nation more broadly. The restrictive customs cultivated in the expanse immediately north of Cairo and the Black settlements that grew out of the contraband camps proved tragically unexceptional as the backlash that Fletcher Martin experienced in the Lower Midwest pulsated across other domains and radiated from one boundary to another.[7] Although by the twentieth century, slavery's former border had lost much of its figurative salience, it continued to constitute a front line in the simmering coercion of Black workers, as Martin's story attests. That simmer boiled over in, among others, Evansville (1903), Springfield (1908), and East St. Louis (1917), then moved north to Chicago (1919), Detroit (1943), and Cicero (1951). Public policies including urban renewal, white flight, redlining, and blockbusting were designed to circumscribe African American mobility and wealth accumulation. Through them, the lily-white rural communities of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries came to be mirrored by racially concentrated areas of affluence in suburban and exurban locales from Newburgh, Indiana, to Grosse Pointe, Michigan, and Mariemont, Ohio, to Kenilworth, Illinois, which as of 2014 still did not have a single African American family.[8] Today, even as U.S. suburbs grow simultaneously more diverse and less materially equal, a disproportionate share of the most segregated cities are squarely in the Midwest, and not merely in the major metropolitans of St. Louis, Chicago, Cleveland, and Cincinnati, but also the mid-sized, small-

er-scale or mono economies such as Flint, Evansville, Peoria, Youngstown, and Danville.[9]

Clearly, challenges by segments of workers within particular industries to destabilize and, at times, seemingly upend old and entrenched hierarchies of class, race, and, to a lesser extent, gender—while sometimes remarkable—proved woefully insufficient. A sustained, much less a radical, labor-civil rights alliance never fully materialized, for instance. The NAACP, the Congress of Racial Equality, the Urban League, and the newly merged AFL-CIO shared some common interests. They even forged temporary moderate and reformist coalitions in Evansville and Cincinnati. In the latter, workplace integration markedly increased and residential segregation lessened during the 1940s and '50s, during the high water of the labor and civil rights movements.[10] Just the same, and in a pattern reflective of national class demobilization and dealignment, business unionism, and eventually, diminishing union density left most of the region's workers without an institutional (labor union or party) framework for organizing along class lines, identifying class enemies, and coordinating confrontations against capital through an alternative politics.

As early as 1949, southern Illinois miner Clint Duff described a precipitous drop in union militancy, an unholy collaboration between mine owners and union officials, unilateral mine closures, and the creation—seemingly overnight—of "ghost towns" across the region, with only the poor, the aggrieved, the unemployed left to pick up the pieces. The familiar workings of capitalism, Duff explained, and its putrid, anti-worker ideology of "survival of the fittest" had exhausted all available human labor before moving on, profits in tow, and leaving those who had created the wealth high and dry, primed toward a dead-end politics of either bourgeois aspiration or racial reaction.[11]

Poverty and the color line appeared to go hand-in-hand with labor's retreat. UMW membership crested in 1946 before a sustained period of gradual decline, leading to its current state, which is less than 10 percent of the union's peak strength.[12] Within a decade, amid perhaps the largest economic expansion in the nation's history, one in ten people in Little Egypt found themselves on state-sponsored relief. By 1955, the Illinois Public Aid Commission deemed fifteen downstate counties—some of the largest coal-producing areas in the United States that had fueled the industrial upsurge of the preceding decades—to somehow be "in the grip of chronic poverty." Deprivation was particularly acute in the heavily African American counties of Alexander and Pulaski, but it was pervasive in rural and overwhelmingly white counties as well.[13] In Cairo, as in Cincinnati the previous month, decades of segregation,

concentrated poverty, joblessness, discriminatory housing, police abuse, and predatory finance eventually aroused an uprising of property destruction—part of a wave of urban rebellion that swept across America's ghettos during the "long, hot summer" of 1967, which the national press yet again characterized as "race war."[14]

The Cold War had brought with it a bipartisan consensus culture, perhaps especially in homogenous small towns, that stoked red scare and, more quietly and permanently, normalized petty-bourgeois attitudes toward everything from foreign policy and popular anticommunism to propertarianism and the allocation of social resources. By the 1970s, a cohesive neoliberal vision had begun to emerge in national politics, underscoring both law and order and small property ownership—the chimeras of "free enterprise" and Black capitalism—as responses to problems (racism and class exploitation) rooted in the basic functioning of the economic system. Regionally, powerful forces of business owners and their interests, from Chambers of Commerce to local Republican Party auxiliaries to the National Conservative Political Action Committee in southern Illinois, either subordinated or made war on unions and anti-austerity and pro-labor candidates, helping fragment the last vestiges of New Deal–era working-class coalition politics.

At the same time, market and segregationist impulses, including those within the New Deal order, accelerated neoliberal drift, part and parcel of a new carceral age and multipronged assault on the essential political and economic rights of marginalized Americans.[15] Prison growth nationally became linked to the weakening of organized labor, especially in rural areas with devalued land and disempowered workers that were hungry for jobs, with detrimental impacts on host communities.[16] In 1963, the Federal Bureau of Prisons opened the nation's first supermax institution in Williamson County.[17] Built to replace the maximum security facility at Alcatraz Island, which closed the same year, Marion Penitentiary became the Bureau's only "level 6" prison for the express purpose of "providing long-term segregation within a highly controlled setting."[18] In a county that was roughly 93 percent white, non-white inmates soon made up two-thirds of the prison population.[19]

This modern-day stockade in what was once a budding ecosystem of radical working-class promise, but where, by the late 1950s, Fletcher Martin was unable to procure a motel room or a hot meal, of course, reflected national punitive trends. Those included federally backed interdiction and prosecution, underwritten by a raced and classed "War on Drugs" that boosted prison construction through surveillance and arms manufacturing, as well as hyper-

policing at home and military intervention abroad.[20] It also spoke to trends in Illinois specifically, where African Americans currently comprise 15 percent of the state population but nearly 60 percent of the state prison population.[21] The United States Penitentiary, Marion—which presently houses more prisoners than there are coal miners in all of Illinois—remains an archetype of social control in a region where stigma, space, and history had long illuminated, often in the brightest of blood-red hues, the unfixed and profit-driven relationship between "crime" and punishment.[22] In fact, the prison's disrepute led Human Rights Watch and other international humanitarian law advocates to develop a damning term for maximum security prisons in which inmates suffer regular human rights abuses and authorities most frequently violate the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. The term is "Marionization."[23]

There was profound symbolism in the shift from local economies sustained by unionized mines to those sustained by supermax prisons. As the age of mass incarceration took flight, southern Illinois seemed on a permanent track, according to CIO spokesman William G. Adrian of Belleville, toward high unemployment due to a relative lack of industry.[24] In the following decade, decreased demand for coal reduced the number of mining jobs, and aggressive anti-union management exploited that scarcity to diminish worker bargaining power and erode union membership.[25] The drop in the region's key industry coincided with shuttered factories and processing plants, slowed river traffic, abandoned rock quarries, terminated Job Corps programs, mechanization and consolidation in farming, and the mass replacement of small businesses with big box and dollar stores. By 2015, Illinois's nine-county Ohio River region had higher poverty rates than Appalachia as a whole. The culmination of a trend that Wieck had observed more than a half-century earlier, the region was marked by vanishing vocations, dwindling educational opportunities, child hunger, substandard housing, drug epidemics, alarming health outcomes, falling life expectancies, and shrinking and aging populations.[26]

Crisis-ridden currents pushed many of those populations toward a reactionary political tide that, while outwardly alternate and novel, has exacerbated class dealignment in party politics by linking real economic decay to perceived moral decay, attempting to soothe genuine material wounds through collective racial and cultural grievance. Predictably, and amid record levels of voter abstention, November 2016 saw communities that had once been bastions of union militancy choose by margins of 40 and 50 percent the

white nationalism and faux populism of Donald Trump over his opponent, Hillary Clinton, whom Republicans charged with waging a "war on coal."[27]

In many ways, Trump's belligerent xenophobia versus Clinton's decrepit neoliberalism exemplified, with tragic consequences, the contradictions and profound limitations of democracy under capitalism as, yet again, this rightist wave was lubricated by increased inequality, uneven development, environmental impacts, and the otherwise normal outcomes of the capitalist economy both regionally and across the globe. The borderland, as elsewhere, has suffered the mutually reinforcing processes of declining living standards and a new precarity of low-wage, temporary, non-benefited, and parceled and individualized labor that has atomized class-based relations, stifled notions of civic belonging, and stood in sharp relief to both the substantive and emotional fulfillment of union-derived organizing.[28] In fact, hindsight suggests that the labor insurgencies of nearly a century ago represented perhaps the last hope of forging a capacious working-class movement that might permeate even the most impenetrable borders. But if sifting through the ashes of a socialist vision that existed only in bits and pieces offers precious few concrete answers, it nevertheless illuminates the utter barrenness of our current political moment of right-wing zealotry against technocratic centrism. The unflinching commitment of our political elites to the preogatives of capital and a draconian border regime south and west of the old slave-free divide seems only to corroborate Fletcher Martin's enduring analysis: where labor exclusion and "the tradition of racial separatism" win out, workers—all of them—lose.

Notes

Introduction

1. "The Negro in Southern Illinois," undated clipping, Box 14, Folder 4, Southern Illinois Collection (SIC), Morris Library, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois.
2. Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free State, 1790–1860* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 153; Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2009); and Arnold R. Hirsh, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940–1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983) make similar points with regard to the twentieth century.
3. Fletcher Martin, "'We Don't Want Your Kind!': Segregation in Illinois," *Atlantic Monthly* (October 1958): 51–55. As one local white historian in Massac County explained in 1950, though Black people were permitted to live in rural southern Illinois, they inhabited segregated spaces and possessed limited employment opportunities, as there were many communities and jobs "to which a Negro may find it useless to aspire." Although the author opposed the practice of African American banishment as practiced in Jonesboro and elsewhere, he believed the course and "the thinking" of society should be "determined by white men." George W. May, *Historical Papers of Massac County, Illinois* (n.p., 1950), 23–29, Willard Library, Evansville, Indiana.
4. As Pierre Bourdieu writes, "Social identity lies in difference, and difference is asserted against what is closest, which represents the greatest threat." *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1979), 479. David R. Roediger maintains that limited face-to-face transracial interaction often has an amplifying effect on white identity. *Colored White: Transcending the Racial Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 129.
5. George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1971), 5; Rudi Batzell, *Organizing Workers in the Shadow of Slavery: Global Inequality, Racial Boundaries, and the Rise of Unions in American and British Capitalism, 1870-1929* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2025), 4. Batzell

describes "near-peripheries" as "comparatively poor, mainly agricultural regions that provided migrant low-wage labor, strikebreakers, and competition to their respective urban-industrial cores."

6. Kerry Pimblott, *Faith in Black Power: Religion, Race, and Resistance in Cairo, Illinois* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2016), 11–12.
7. On the problem of "race relations," see Barbara J. Fields, "Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America," *New Left Review* 1/181 (May/1990): 95–118; and Karen E. and Barbara J. Fields, *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life* (New York: Verso, 2012), 39–40, 150.
8. To Selig Perlman, who coined the concept "scarcity consciousness," pessimism defined the U.S. working class, despite the collectivist nature of and, at times, radical optimist tendencies within American labor unions. *A Theory of the Labor Movement* (New York: Macmillan, 1928), 239.
9. Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Verso, 1990), 16; David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991), 8.
10. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Henry Reeve (New York: Bantam, 2002), 416.
11. Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 198. V. Jacque Voegeli began his 1967 study of race in the Civil War–era Midwest by asserting that Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois were "the region most firmly committed to white supremacy." *Free but Not Equal: The Midwest and the Negro during the Civil War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 1. Eugene H. Berwanger described Black exclusion as a fundamentally "midwestern attitude." *The Frontier Against Slavery: Western Anti–Negro Prejudice and the Slavery Extension Controversy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1967), 108. Foner also characterized the "lower North" of southern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois as a racially illiberal breakwater between North and South. *Free Soil*, 186. More recently, Brent M. S. Campney's analyses of "not Dixie" racism in the Lower Midwest challenged the idea that "hard" racism was necessarily worse within the South. *This Is Not Dixie: Racist Violence in Kansas, 1861–1927* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015); and *Hostile Heartland: Racism, Repression, and Resistance in the Midwest* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2019). In his book on slavery in Illinois, M. Scott Heerman, too, argues that antebellum southern Illinois was especially "notorious for its racism." *Alchemy of Slavery: Human Bondage and Emancipation in Illinois Country, 1730–1865* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 11. Walter Johnson, meanwhile, depicts St. Louis, including its hinterland in southwestern Illinois, as exemplifying the intersections of imperialism, racism, and capitalism. *The Broken Heart of America: St. Louis and the Violent History of the United States* (New York: Basic Books, 2020). Berwanger, *Frontier*, 108.
12. Cheryl I. Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review* 106 (June 1993): 1709–91.
13. John Hartigan Jr., *Odd Tribes: Toward a Cultural Analysis of White People* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 6–7, 14. See also Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

14. My understanding of "class" conforms to Marxist tradition, as an objective condition distinct from either a form of consciousness or, especially, a set of cultural markers. I am in agreement on this point with Robin D. G. Kelley who, in his critique of defining class through behavioral rather than economic characteristics, reminds that any definition of class that centers common behavior (rather than income, poverty level, or type of work) is "a definition of class driven more by moral panic than by systematic analysis." *Yo' Mama's Disfunktional!: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997), 18. On "class in itself" and "class for itself," see E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage, 1966), 9–10. Class consciousness emerged when, according to Thompson, "some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs."
15. Some scholars use "interracial" to describe institutions that achieved full integration and "biracial" to describe those that experienced association across the color line without integration. Because many institutions did not fit either model, I use "interracial," which was always "a matter of degree," to describe both, as does Joseph Gerteis, in *Class and the Color Line: Interracial Class Coalition in the Knights of Labor and the Populist Movement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 6.
16. On racial capitalism, see Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (London: Zed Press, 1983).
17. Alex Callinicos, "Race and Class," *International Socialism* (Summer 1992): 30.
18. On the importance of "recognition politics" and culture as a terrain of struggle, see Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking Recognition," *New Left Review* 3 (May 2000): 107–120.
19. Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race: Volume 1, Racial Oppression and Social Control* (London: Verso, 1994), 1.
20. Johnson, *Broken Heart*, 263.
21. Allen, *Invention*, 13.
22. Michael Reich contends that race-based "class fraction," or labor segmentation by race, tends to produce less positive net outcomes for workers as a whole (including white workers) by weakening labor's overall bargaining power. See, *Racial Inequality: A Political-Economic Analysis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982). On how racial segmentation has led to direct material benefits for "skilled" white workers, see Patrick L. Mason, *The Economics of Structural Racism: Stratification Economics and U.S. Labor Markets* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2023).
23. W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1935), 700–701.
24. Roediger, *Wages*, 13.
25. David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865–1925* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 81.
26. Eric Arnesen, "Up From Exclusion: Black and White Workers, Race, and the State of Labor History," *Reviews in American History* 26 (March 1998): 156; Brian Kelly, "Introduction," in Bernard Mandel, *Labor, Free and Slave: Workingmen and the Antislavery Movement in the United States* (repr., Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), xi–xli.
27. Alonzo M. Ward, "The Specter of Black Labor: African American Workers in Illinois

Before the Great Migration, 1847 to 1910" (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2017), 92.

28. See, Vivek Chibber, *The Class Matrix: Social Theory after the Cultural Turn* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2022).
29. David R. Roediger, *Race, Class, and Marxism* (New York: Verso, 2017), 20.
30. Noel Ignatiev, *Treason to Whiteness Is Loyalty to Humanity* (New York: Verso, 2022), 148–76.
31. On how whiteness scholars have misapplied Du Bois's concept, and a critique of whiteness discourse broadly, see Cedric Johnson, "The Wages of Roediger: Why Three Decades of Whiteness Studies Has Not Produced the Left We Need," *Nonsite*, September 9, 2019, https://nonsite.org/the–wages–of–roediger–why–three–decades–of–whiteness–studies–has–not–produced–the–left–we–need/.
32. Lerone Bennett Jr., *The Shaping of Black America* (Chicago: Johnson Publishing, 1975), 77–78; Allen, *Invention*, 21.
33. Exceptions include Elizabeth Grace Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation, 1890–1940* (New York: Pantheon, 1998); Linda Gordon, *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011); Natalia Molina, *How Race Is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).
34. Barbara J. Fields and Peter Kolchin charge critical whiteness studies with being definitionally ambiguous. See Barbara J. Fields, "Whiteness, Racism, and Identity," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 60 (Fall 2001): 48–56; Peter Kolchin, "Whiteness Studies: The New History of Race in America," *Journal of American History* 89 (June 2002): 154–73. On how the "new racism" is absent of explicitly racialist discourses, see Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *White Supremacy and Racism in the Post–Civil Rights Era* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001). Annalee Newitz and Matt Wray underscore the importance of racial formation as it relates to historical spatial-social development, noting that conceptions of whiteness "vary according to the politics of place and region" in *White Trash: Race and Class in America* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 4. John Hartigan Jr. also pinpoints "the intensely local nature of social dynamics that shape whites' racial judgement and perceptions," and urges scholars to investigate "white racialness as it manifests in particular places." *Odd Tribes*, 14. In doing so, Hartigan stresses the need for "a mode of analysis that distinguishes between racial dynamics at the national and local or regional levels" and encourages historians to examine whiteness within "particular locales." "Whiteness and Appalachian Studies: What's the Connection?," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 10 (Spring–Fall 2004): 62, 70.
35. Ronald L. Lewis, *Black Coal Miners in America: Race, Class, and Community Conflict, 1780–1980* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1987), x.
36. Matthew E. Stanley, "*Hillbilly Elegy* and Anti-Worker Mythologies," *International Socialist Review* 108 (Spring 2018): 38–56; Anthony Harkins and Meredith McCarroll, eds., *Appalachian Reckoning: A Region Responds to* Hillbilly Elegy (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2019).
37. Paul Waldman and Thomas Schaller, *White Rural Rage: The Threat to American Democracy* (New York: Random House, 2024).
38. Recent studies suggest that racial inequality in the Midwest is deeper than any other part of the nation, including the South. Colin Gordon, "Race in the Heartland: Eq-

uity, Opportunity, Public Policy in the Midwest," University of Iowa and Iowa Public Policy Project (October 2019), https://files.epi.org/uploads/Race–in–the–Midwest–FINAL–Interactive–1.pdf. On the Midwest and whiteness, see Kristen Hoganson, *The Heartland: An American History* (New York: Penguin, 2019). Britt E. Halvorson and Joshua O. Reno argue that "regional iconography is not merely a spatial representation but a way of tying white political-economic and imperial claims to land into a powerful and persistent knot with white fears and fantasies about the racialized body politic." *Imagining the Heartland: White Supremacy and the American Midwest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2022), 15.

39. On the meaning of the antebellum West and its wartime sectionalization, see Matthew E. Stanley, *The Loyal West: Civil War and Reunion in Middle America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017).
40. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 49–72.
41. See Paul M. Renfro and Matthew E. Stanley, "The Reactionary Heartland Is a Myth," *Dissent*, September 18, 2019, https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/the–reactionary–heartland–is–a–myth/.
42. Halvorson and Reno, *Heartland*, 4.
43. Newitz and Wray maintain that "white trash" is "not just a classist slur—but also a racial epithet that marks out certain whites as a breed apart, a dysgenic race unto themselves." *White Trash*, 2. Robyn Wiegman, conversely, asserts that "white trash" and its parallels are forms of class, not racial, oppression. "Whiteness Studies and the Paradox of Particularity," *Boundary* 2 (1999): 115–50. Likewise, Barbara Ellen Smith contends that white-on-white stereotypes are not equivalent to racial discrimination, do not erase or excuse their victims against their own participation in and reproduction of whiteness, and do not preclude their victims from the advantages of being 'white'" in "De-Gradation of Whiteness," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 10 (1&2): 38–57. In his study of Appalachian-born workers in Detroit, Hartigan extends this view by convincingly arguing that "images of poor whites are a fundamental means by which the cultural boundaries between whiteness and blackness are established." "Whiteness," 63. For a broader history of the concept of "white trash," see Nancy Isenberg, *White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America* (New York: Viking, 2004); Hartigan explains that "white trash" represented a "conflated racial and class category" that might best be characterized as a "degraded form of whiteness—that is, whiteness without key forms of support, individual striving (upward mobility) or institutional (from home ownership to political activity)." "Whiteness," 69.
44. Hartigan, *Odd Tribes*, 15.
45. For a more exact definition of borders, see Étienne Balibar, *Politics and the Other Scene* (London: Verso, 2002), 75–86.
46. Reece Jones, *White Borders: The History of Race and Immigration in the United States from Chinese Exclusion to the Border Wall* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2021), 3.
47. Greg Grandin, *The End of the Myth: From the Frontier to the Border Wall in the Mind of America* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2019), 8.
48. James Anderson and Liam O'Dowd, "Borders, Border Regions, and Territoriality: Contradictory Meanings, Changing Significance," *Regional Studies* (1999): 593–604.
49. Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson, *Border as Method, or, The Multiplication of Labor* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 19.
50. On this process as it relates to the U.S.-Mexico border, see Lee Bebout, *Whiteness*

on the Border: Mapping the U.S. Racial Imagination in Brown and White (New York: New York University Press, 2016).

51. Hartigan, *Odd Tribes*, 3.
52. On the metropolitan-peripheral analogy, see David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).
53. Serhat Karakayali, "Borders," *Krisis: Journal for Contemporary Philosophy* 2 (2018), https://archive.krisis.eu/borders/; Chris Rumford, "Introduction: Citizens and Borderwork in Europe," *Space and Polity* 12 (2008): 1–12.
54. Roediger, *Colored White*, 128.
55. Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).
56. Herbert G. Gutman, *Power and Culture: Essays on the American Working Class* (New York: Pantheon, 1987).
57. On the conservative and border inflections of free labor ideology, see Foner, *Free Soil*, 186-225.
58. Christopher Phillips, *The Rivers Ran Backward: The Civil War and the Remaking of the American Middle Border* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 13, 63, 336.
59. On the European projection thesis, see George P. Rawick, *From Sunup to Sundown: The Making of the Black Community* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1972).
60. Mike Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream: Politics and Economy in the History of the U.S. Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1986), 14–15.
61. This pattern of white people across all social classes using race as a cudgel or as an explanation for fears and circumstances that are, in reality, features of a particular economic system—defining legitimate labor as "white" and competition as "Black," and blaming inequality and deprivation on other races rather than the basic workings of capitalism—calls into question the utility of a phrase like "racial capitalism." It suggests instead that racialization and racial segmentation are intrinsic parts of capitalism, or that "racial capitalism," much like "crony capitalism," might best be described by what it is: capitalism. On the idea that there is no "non-racial" capitalism, see Charles Post, "Beyond 'Racial Capitalism': Toward a Unified Theory of Capitalism and Racial Oppression," *The Brooklyn Rail*, n.d. https://brooklynrail.org/2020/10/field–notes/Beyond–Racial–Capitalism–Toward–A–Unified–Theory–of–Capitalism–and–Racial–Oppression. For a counterpoint, see Satnam Virdee, "The Longue Durée of Racialized Capitalism: A Response to Charlie Post," *Race.Ed*, April 16, 2021, https://www.race.ed.ac.uk/the–longue–duree–of–racialized–capitalism–a–response–to–charlie–post/.
62. Fredrickson, *Black Image*, 134.
63. Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000), 39.
64. Berwanger, *Frontier*, 36.
65. James S. Allen, *Reconstruction: The Battle for Democracy* (New York: International Publishers, 1937), 12.
66. Ward, "Specter," 141, 154.
67. C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955); Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

68. Charisse Burden-Stelly, *Black Scare/Red Scare: Theorizing Capitalist Racism in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2023), 2.
69. Roediger, *Colored White*, 40.
70. Ida B. Wells, *Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 46–48.
71. Pimblott argues that Cairo's Black working class remained "extraordinarily marginalized" into the twentieth century owing to a lack of Black institutions vis-à-vis larger border cities. Cairo's absence of a large industrial base also precluded various forms of worker power and organization, as Black wage earners remained overwhelmingly day laborers and seasonal and service workers. This resulted in both lower living standards for Black workers and the underdevelopment of a Black middle class. Darrel Bigham describes similar patterns in Evansville. *Faith in Black Power*, 19.
72. *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, reprinted in *Cairo Bulletin*, September 7, 1904.
73. "Formula for Violence," July 11, 1976, n.p., Box 20, Folder 48, SIC.
74. Fred L. Standley and Lewis H. Pratt, eds., *Conversations with James Baldwin* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1989), 6–7.
75. Michael Goldfield defines power as "the ability of individuals, groups of workers, or a whole class to realize their interests." Whereas "structural power" for workers entails leverage derived from one's relation to the labor market (and increases during periods of low unemployment), "associational power" comes from alliances with other workers or outside groups, including the local community. For workers with minimal structural power, such as "unskilled" workers during periods of high unemployment, associational power is critical. *The Southern Key: Race, Class, and Radicalism in the 1930s and 1940s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 24–26.
76. Harry Haywood, *Negro Liberation* (New York: International Publishers, 1948), 214.
77. Ward, "Specter," 11.
78. On the correlation between labor conflict and racial violence in post–Second World War Chicago, see William M. Tuttle, "Labor Conflict and Racial Violence: The Black Worker in Chicago, 1894–1919," in *Black Labor in America*, ed. Milton Cantor (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1969).
79. Lewis, *Black Miners*, xi, 81.
80. Goldfield, *Southern Key*, 67–71. On early mass unionism and radicalism in Illinois's District 12, see John H. M. Laslett, *Colliers Across the Sea: A Comparative Study of Class Formation in Scotland and the American Midwest, 1830–1924* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 151–72.
81. Troy Rondinone, *The Great Industrial War: Framing Class Conflict in the Media, 1865–1950* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 4.
82. United Mine Workers of America, *Official Report of the 10th Annual Convention of District 12* (Joliet, IL: Joliet Republican Printing Co., 1899), 101.
83. *Daily Worker*, December 3, 1929.
84. *Daily Worker*, December 14, 1929.
85. John McCormick and Chad Day, "This Illinois Town Is Losing People Faster than Anywhere in the U.S.," *Wall Street Journal*, August 25, 2021, https://www.wsj.com/articles/this–illinois–county–is–losing–people–faster–than–anywhere–in–the–u–s–11629883801.
86. Randal S. Olsen, "U.S. Racial Diversity by County," https://randalolson.com/2014/04/29/u–s–racial–diversity–by–county/. Exceptions include Hamilton

County, Ohio, and St. Clair and Alexander counties in Illinois, whose larger Black populations today were shaped by the relative refuge offered by large metro areas and, in the case of Cairo, wartime demographic changes.

87. Social Science Data Analysis Network, "Segregation: Dissimilarity Indices," https://www.censusscope.org/us/rank_dissimilarity_white_black.html.
88. John H. Keiser, "Black Strikebreakers and Racism in Illinois, 1865–1900," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 65 (Autumn 1972): 313.

Part 1: Fortress Free Labor

1. David Zarefsky, *Lincoln, Douglas, and Slavery: In the Crucible of Public Debate* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), xii.
2. James E. Davis, *Frontier Illinois* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 414; William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991).
3. Orville Hickman Browning letter, June 10, 1858, Orville Hickman Browning Papers, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library (ALPL), Springfield, Illinois.
4. David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991), 142.
5. Joshua A. Lynn maintains that the priorities of antebellum Democrats shifted from democratic expansion, accompanied by a language of egalitarianism and producerism, toward the explicit protection of white male supremacy. However, Republicans along the border held similar aims and espoused similar rhetoric, the key difference being that they saw white manhood as best protected by limiting slavery's expansion. *Preserving the White Man's Republic: Jacksonian Democracy, Race, and the Transformation of American Conservatism* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2019).
6. David R. Roediger, *Colored White: Transcending the Racial Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 128.
7. Rodney O. Davis and Douglas L. Wilson, eds., *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 116–17; Allen C. Guelzo, *Lincoln and Douglas: The Debates that Defined America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008), 179.
8. The number of references to "white men," "white people," the "white race," or "white constituents" over the course of the debates broke down as follows: 13 in Ottawa (7 by Douglas, 6 by Lincoln); 2 in Freeport (both by Douglas); 22 in Jonesboro (18 by Douglas, 4 by Lincoln); 22 in Charleston (12 by Douglas, 10 by Lincoln); 24 in Galesburg (21 by Douglas, 3 by Lincoln); 17 in Quincy (8 by Douglas; 9 by Lincoln); 16 in Alton (10 by Douglas, 6 by Lincoln). Northern Illinois University, "Lincoln Douglas Debates of 1858," https://digital.lib.niu.edu/illinois/lincoln/topics/lincolndouglas.
9. NIU, "Lincoln Douglas Debates of 1858."
10. Harold Holzer, ed., *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates: The First Complete, Unexpurgated Text* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 138; Davis and Wilson, *Lincoln-Douglas*, 83.
11. Timothy S. Good, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates and the Making of a President* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2007), 115; Frémont received fewer than thirty votes per county in Alexander, Clay, Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jackson, Johnson, Massac, Pope, Pulaski, Saline, White, and Williamson counties. Howard W. Allen and Vincent A. Lacey, eds., *Illinois Elections, 1818–1990: Candidates and County*

Returns for President, Governor, Senate, and House of Representatives (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992), 135–37.

12. Guelzo, *Lincoln and Douglas*, 172.
13. Douglas K. Meyer, *Making the Heartland Quilt: A Geographical History of Settlement and Migration in Early Nineteenth-Century Illinois* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000), 213.
14. Guelzo, *Lincoln and Douglas*, 171.
15. While there were non-socioeconomic factors at play, including local party organizing and the degree of two-party competition, a comparison with comparably sized but wealthier southern Illinois counties (Franklin, Jefferson, White, and Williamson) reveals that Union County had considerably lower voter turnout in the 1860 congressional and presidential elections. Among eligible voters, congressional and presidential voter turnout was: Franklin County, 88.2%/90.5%; Jefferson County, 84.2%/90.3%; Union County, 61.9%/78.8%; White County, 85.1%/85.7%; and Williamson County, 87.0%/90.1%. Allen and Lacey, *Illinois Elections*, 147–49; United States Census Bureau, "1860 United States Census, State of Illinois," https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1860/population/1860a-11.pdf.
16. Kenneth J. Winkle, *The Young Eagle: The Rise of Abraham Lincoln* (Dallas: Taylor Trade Publishing, 2001), 24.
17. Charles Neely, *Tales and Songs of Southern Illinois* reprint (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1998), 3–14.
18. United States Census Bureau, "1860 United States Census, State of Illinois."
19. For the use of "African Democracy" to describe Democratic proslavery positions, see Lyman Trumbull to Abraham Lincoln, December 25, 1857, Box 1, Folder 7, Lyman Trumbull Family Papers, ALPL; Berwanger, *Frontier*, 124.
20. Allen and Lacey, *Illinois Elections*, 143; Stanley, *Loyal West*, 185.
21. See, for example, the *Jonesboro Gazette* and Woodsfield, Ohio's *Spirit of Democracy*.
22. Roediger, *Colored White*, 128–29.
23. The idea of the "deserving poor" had its roots in Tudor England, and was by the nineteenth century continuously refitted to justify inequality within the emerging capitalist system. Paul Slack, *The English Poor Law, 1531–1782* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 5–9.
24. Richard Lyle Power, *Planting Corn Belt Culture: The Impress of Upland Southerner and Yankee in the Old Northwest* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1953), 72.

Chapter 1: Boundaries and Bondage

1. Richard Lyle Power, *Planting Corn Belt Culture: The Impress of Upland Southerner and Yankee in the Old Northwest* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1953), 136.
2. Douglas K. Meyer, *Making the Heartland Quilt: A Geographical History of Settlement and Migration in Early-Nineteenth-Century Illinois* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000), 166–68. Counties bordering the Wabash and Mississippi contained denser networks of settlers from New England and the Mid-Atlantic; at the time of Illinois statehood, 71 percent of non-Indian residents were born below the Ohio River, with Kentucky serving as the largest donor state. James E. Davis, *Frontier Illinois* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 159.
3. Frederic Austin Ogg, *The Old Northwest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921),

177n2; on the "advancing frontier," see Berwanger, *Frontier*, 1; on "southernization," see Power, *Planting*, viii-ix. Power argues that southern Indiana and Illinois were the northernmost "outpost of southern folkways," distinct from the "Corn Belt" Midwest.

4. Darrel E. Bigham, *Towns and Villages of the Lower Ohio* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 43.
5. Matthew Salafia, *Slavery's Borderland: Freedom and Bondage Along the Ohio River* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 54–55; Forrest G. Wood, *Black Scare: The Racist Response to Emancipation and Reconstruction* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1970), 21.
6. Though it survived in the Deep South, other appellations displaced "cracker" in the Lower Midwest and Border South. Raven I. McDavid and Virginia McDavid, "Cracker and Hoosier," *Names* 21 (September 1973): 165–66.
7. William Henry Perrin, *A History of Alexander, Union, and Pulaski Counties, Illinois* (Chicago: O.L. Baskin, 1883), 450, 469.
8. N.a., *History of Wayne and Clay Counties, Illinois* (Chicago: Globe Publishing, 1884), 355.
9. Davis, *Frontier Illinois*, 1–3.
10. Power, *Planting*, 142.
11. James Hall, *Letters from the West* (London: Henry Colburn, 1828), 271, 306–7; Bigham, *Towns and Villages*, 51.
12. Nancy Isenberg, *White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America* (New York: Viking, 2016), 105–7, 115. "Jonathan" was slang for a generic American. On eye gouging and other "backwoods" violence, see Elliot J. Gorn, "'Gouge and Bite, Pull Hair and Scratch': The Social Significance of Fighting in the Southern Backcountry," *American Historical Review* 90 (February 1985): 18–43.
13. Thomas Ford, *A History of Illinois from Its Commencement as a State in 1818 to 1847* (Chicago: S.C. Griggs & Co., 1854), 280–81.
14. David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 771. Fischer designates southern Illinois as part of the cultural "backcountry."
15. David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865–1925* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 87.
16. On capitalism and the shifting frontier in Kentucky, see Stephen Aron, *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).
17. Power, *Planting*, 50.
18. J. Herman Schauinger, ed., "The Letters of Godlove S. Orth, Hoosier Whig," *Indiana Magazine of History* 39 (December 1943): 367.
19. Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 49.
20. Davis, *Frontier Illinois*, 160.
21. Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005), 198.
22. Bigham, *Towns and Villages*, 95–96; Joseph Tuttle, "Caleb Mills and Indiana Common Schools," *American Journal of Education* 31 (1881): 137.

23. Power, *Planting*, 27–37, 72, 82–86.
24. Ford, *History of Illinois*, 279–80.
25. Perrin, *History*, 451, 467, 479; Pulaski County Historical Book Committee, *Pulaski County, Illinois, 1987* (Paducah, KY, 1987), 63. Some poor farms, such as that in Pulaski County, did not close until New Deal–era relief programs rendered them unnecessary.
26. Stephen Middleton, *The Black Laws: Race and the Legal Process in Early Ohio* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), 41.
27. Salafia, *Slavery's Borderland*, 69.
28. M. Scott Heerman, *Alchemy of Slavery: Human Bondage and Emancipation in Illinois Country, 1730–1865* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 15.
29. Salafia, *Slavery's Borderland*, 67, 78–88; See also, Emma Lou Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana Before 1900: A Study of a Minority* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Press, 1957), 1–30.
30. Heerman, *Alchemy,* 118–22.
31. Eugene H. Berwanger, *The Frontier Against Slavery: Western Anti-Negro Prejudice and the Slavery Extension Controversy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1967), 7–18; Bigham, *Towns and Villages*, 41.
32. Heerman, *Alchemy,* 105–6.
33. Alexander Davidson and Bernard Stuve, *A Complete History of Illinois from 1673 to 1873* (Springfield: Illinois State Journal, 1874), 311.
34. Thornbrough, *Negro*, 25.
35. Ward, "Specter," 26.
36. State of Illinois, *Constitution of the State of Illinois* (Washington, D.C.: E. De Krafft, 1818), 14.
37. Keith P. Griffler, *Front Line of Freedom: African Americans and the Forging of the Underground Railroad in the Ohio Valley* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004); Salafia, *Slavery's Borderland*, 193. There were Underground Railroad crossings in southern Indiana near Rockport; in Harrison County; in Warrick County; and at Diamond Island, near Posey County. Brian Butler, *An Undergrowth of Folly: Public Order, Race Anxiety, and the 1903 Evansville, Indiana, Riot* (New York: Garland, 2000), 57–58.
38. Kate Masur, *Until Justice Be Done: America's First Civil Rights Movement, from the Revolution to Reconstruction* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2021), 36.
39. Thornbrough, *Negro*, 47. For an example of the folk memory of Quaker interracialism in southern Indiana, see Delores Nolcox oral history interview, conducted by Jean E. Spears, May 21, 1979, Indiana Historical Society (IHS), Indianapolis, Indiana.
40. Heerman, *Alchemy,* 18–21. On runaways and the formation of Black communities in Massac County, see Oliver J. Page, *History of Massac County, Illinois,* vol. 1 (Metropolis, IL: N.P., 1900), 41; on rural Blacks, see Ward, "Specter," 83–91.
41. *Southern Illinoisan*, July 15, 2000, Box 14, Folder 1, Southern Illinois Collection, Morris Library (ML), Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois.
42. Brent M. S. Campney, *Hostile Heartland: Racism, Repression, and Resistance in the Midwest* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2019), 41.
43. Josiah Morrow, *The History of Brown County, Ohio* (Chicago: W.H. Beers, 1883), 313–15.
44. *History of Wayne County*, 298.

45. Frank M. Gilbert, *History of the City of Evansville and Vanderburgh County, Indiana* (Reprint, Evansville, IN: Tri-State Genealogical Society, 1988), 164.
46. Salafia, *Slavery's Borderland*, 6, 109, 135–35.
47. Thornbrough, *Negro*, 20.
48. Eric Michael Rhodes, "Midwestern 'Mobocracy': The Emergence of Labor Politics and Racial Exclusion in Cincinnati and the Lower Old Northwest, 1829–1836," in Jon K. Lauck, ed., *The Making of the Midwest: Essays on the Formation of Midwestern Identity, 1787–1900* (Hastings, NE: Hastings College Press, 2020), 305–29.
49. Heerman, *Alchemy,* 122.
50. Salafia, *Slavery's Borderland*, 159; Norman Dwight Harris, *The History of Negro Servitude in Illinois* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg and Co., 1904), 188.
51. Corey M. Brooks, "Reconsidering Politics in the Study of American Abolitionists," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 8 (June 2018): 296.
52. Masur, *Justice*, 16–17, 349.
53. Nelson W. Evans, *A History of Scioto County, Ohio* (Scioto, OH: Nelson W. Evans, 1903), 613. Early county histories estimate that approximately eighty Black residents were expelled in January 1830.
54. Thornbrough, *Negro*, 31, 57. While Indiana's 1831 constitution required Black settlers to register with county officials and provide bond for "good behavior," the 1851 measure prohibited Blacks from entering the state altogether, as well as from voting, testifying in court, serving in the militia, and attending public school.
55. Joe William Trotter Jr., *River Jordan: African American Urban Life in the Ohio Valley* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 24–31.
56. Ibid., 27.
57. Berwanger, *Frontier*, 32; Elmer Gertz, "The Black Laws of Illinois," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 56 (Autumn 1963): 454–73.
58. Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790–1860* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 69.
59. Norman Dwight Harris, *The History of Negro Servitude in Illinois* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg and Co., 1904), 233–34.
60. Berwanger, *Frontier*, 24. For instance, Illinois governor Thomas Coles opposed slavery because he believed that its introduction, and the inevitability of manumission, would eventually result in greater race mixing and a larger free Black population.
61. V. Jacque Voegeli, *Free but Not Equal: The Midwest and the Negro during the Civil War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 2.
62. Thornbrough, *Negro*, 82.
63. Salafia, *Slavery's Borderland*, 123. Voters in Clark County, across the Ohio River from Louisville, demonstrated the greatest support for exclusion provisions, Thornbrough, *Negro*, 65–70. Campney argues that fears of being "overrun" by southern Blacks led to exceptional support for racial exclusion among white southern Illinoisans, 43–44. For how Indianans voted on Article XIII, the exclusion clause, see Charles Kettleborough, ed., *Constitution Making in Indiana: A Source Book of Constitutional Documents with Historical Introduction and Critical Notes*, vol. 1 1780–1851 (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Commission, 1916), 360–62.
64. Thornbrough, *Negro*, 57–58.
65. Berwanger, *Frontier*, 44–46, 49–51.
66. Masur, *Justice*, 242.

67. Foner asserts that legal racial discrimination was most severe where the social order was least stratified: "The very social mobility for which the West has been celebrated may have tended to exaggerate racial prejudice." *Free Soil*, 262.
68. Morris Birkbeck, *An Appeal to the People of Illinois on the Question of a Convention* (Shawneetown, IL: C. Jones, 1823), 18; see also Berwanger, *Frontier*, 25–26.
69. *Vandalia Whig*, March 20, 1833.
70. Adolph Reed Jr., *The South: Jim Crow and Its Afterlives* (New York: Verso, 2022), 75.
71. David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991), 47, 68, 85.
72. Lawrence M. Lipin, *Producers, Proletarians, and Politicians*: *Workers and Party Politics in Evansville and New Albany, Indiana, 1850–1887* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 1–12. On producerism as "schizophrenic" class consciousness, see Mike Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream: Politics and Economy in the History of the U.S. Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1986), 28.
73. Thornbrough, *Negro*, 109.
74. Samuel Hunter to *Illinois Gazette*, September 1827, Samuel Hunter Letter, Chicago Historical Society (CHS).
75. Samuel Cochran Certificate, February 25, 1820, CHS.
76. "Historical Paper Related to Negroes in Gallatin County," p. 43, Folders 27–28, Box 1, Series I, John I. Wright Collection, ML.
77. N.a., *History of Gallatin, Saline, Hamilton, Franklin, and Williamson Counties, Illinois* (Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing, 1887), 32.
78. Campney, *Hostile Heartland*, 27.
79. Ibid., 25–31.
80. Leonard L. Richards, *Gentlemen of Property and Standing: Anti-Abolition Mobs in Jacksonian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 42.
81. P. T. Chapman, *A History of Johnson County, Illinois* (Herrin, IL: Herrin News, 1925), 138.
82. Thornbrough, *Negro*, 53.
83. Campney, *Hostile Heartland*, 16–22.
84. Thornbrough, *Negro*, 130–31.
85. Butler, *Undergrowth*, 57–59.
86. George Rudé, *The Crowd in History, A History of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730–1848* (New York: Wiley, 1964).
87. Salafia, *Slavery's Borderland*, 153.
88. Richards, *Property and Standing*, 35–43.
89. Ibid., 100.
90. Ford, *History of Illinois*, 233, 246.
91. Richards, *Property and Standing*, 5, 30, 82–90. Per Richards, what distinguished eastern from western mobs was the lack of local resistance in the West, particularly among "respectable" members of society (111).
92. Isenberg, *White Trash*, 115. On the perceived physiognomy of Indiana children and women, see also, John Weiss, *Life and Correspondence of Theodore Parker,* Vol. 1 (New York: D. Appleton, 1864), 327.
93. John Russell Bartlett, *Dictionary of Americanisms: A Glossary of Words and Phrases* (New York: Bartlett and Welford, 1848), 180; Jacob Piatt Dunn, *The Word Hoosier* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1907), 8–9.

94. Dunn, *Word Hoosier*, 15–19; one modern theory holds that "Hoosier" may have developed from the Black evangelist Harry Hoosier, who traveled the backcountry in the late 1700s. See William D. Piersen, "The Origin of the Word 'Hoosier': A New Interpretation," *Indiana Magazine of History* 91 (June 1995): 189–96.
95. Dunn, *Word Hoosier*, 9. Finley maintained that they were nevertheless more civilized than their "Yankee" neighbors presented them.
96. "A Hoosier's Nest," *Indianapolis Journal*, January 1, 1833.
97. Sarah T. Harvey Letter, "Hoosier" Letters Collection, 1835–1845, IHS.
98. Stu Fliege, *Tales and Trails of Illinois* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 24.
99. Allan A. Metcalf, *How We Talk: American Regional English Today* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), 101.
100. Herbert K. Russell, *The State of Southern Illinois: An Illustrated History* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2012), 67; Power, *Planting*, 150.
101. Ford, *History of Illinois*, 68.
102. Power, *Planting*, 27.
103. Jasper William Cross Jr., "Divided Loyalties in Southern Illinois during the Civil War" (MA Thesis, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 1942), 3.
104. John W. Allen, *Legends and Lore of Southern Illinois* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1963), 41–42.
105. *New North-West* (Deer Lodge, MT), December 10, 1875.
106. Bruce Elliott Johansen, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Native American Legal Tradition* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 86.
107. Rosaura Sanchez and Beatrice Pita, *Spatial and Discursive Violence in the US Southwest* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021), 1–25.
108. Manufacturing was proportionately high in Ohio and Indiana river counties compared to interior counties, with the highest value of production being in Cincinnati, Madison, New Albany, and Evansville. Hamilton County (Cincinnati) accounted for 39 percent of Ohio's manufacturing in 1860. Salafia, *Slavery's Borderland*, 232–36.
109. Davis, *Frontier Illinois*, 356–57.
110. Ibid., 306.
111. Power, *Planting*, 2, 102-104.
112. Davis, *Frontier Illinois*, 399–400.
113. Russell, *Southern Illinois*, 67.
114. Bigham, *Towns and Villages*, 3.
115. Ford, *History of Illinois*, 100.

Chapter 2: What Is Black on One Side of the Line Is White on the Other

1. Andrew R. L. Cayton, *Ohio: The History of a People* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2002), 148–50. Cayton argues that the standard of living for most Cincinnatians probably declined with the onset of "unskilled" wage employment, 25.
2. Robin Blackburn, *An Unfinished Revolution: Karl Marx and Abraham Lincoln* (London: Verso, 2011). On Lincoln's and the early Republicans' relationship to capitalism, see James A. Stevenson, "Abraham Lincoln on Labor and Capital," *Civil War History* 38 (September 1991): 197–209.
3. Matt Karp, "The Mass Politics of Antislavery," *Catalyst* 3 (Summer 2019): 131–78.
4. *Omaha Republican*, reprinted in *Chicago Press and Tribune*, December 21, 1859.
5. *Chicago Tribune*, April 17, 1861.

6. David Brody, *In Labor's Cause: Main Themes on the History of the American Worker* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 50.
7. "Democracy and Republicanism: The Negro Equality Doctrine Exposed," *Chicago Times and Herald*, September 22, 1860, Bound Volume 1, Lyman Trumbull Scrapbook, 1858–1860 (LTS), Lyman Trumbull Family Papers (LTFP), Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library (ALPL), Springfield, Illinois.
8. *Anti–Slavery Bugle* (New Lisbon, OH), January 29, 1847.
9. *Chicago Tribune*, reprinted in *White Cloud Kansas Chief*, April 1, 1858.
10. Matthew Salafia, *Slavery's Borderland: Freedom and Bondage Along the Ohio River* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 3.
11. Nicole Etcheson, *The Emerging Midwest: Upland Southerners and the Political Culture of the Old Northwest, 1787–1861* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 66–67.
12. Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 102.
13. Edward F. Bullard Letter, October 27, 1856, Chicago Historical Society.
14. *McArthur Democrat* (Vinton County, OH), September 2, 1858.
15. *Belmont Chronicle* (St. Clairsville, OH), August 11, 1859.
16. Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 186.
17. On the Democrats' turn toward proslavery politics, see Graham A. Peck, *Making an Antislavery Nation: Lincoln, Douglas, and the Battle Over Freedom* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017), 9–10.
18. *Chicago Press and Tribune*, February 25, 1860.
19. *Belmont Chronicle* (St. Clairsville, OH), May 1, 1856.
20. *Louisville Examiner*, May 19, 1849; George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1971), 11.
21. Henry Clay to the Colonization Society of Kentucky, December 17, 1829, *The Papers of Henry Clay,* vol. 8, ed. Robert Seager II (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984), 147.
22. Christopher Phillips, *The Rivers Ran Backward: The Civil War and the Remaking of the American Middle Border* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 63; Samuel H. Cox, *Debate at the Lane Seminary: Letter Against the American Colonization Society* (Boston: Garrison and Knapp, 1834); Cincinnati Colonization Society, *Proceedings of the Cincinnati Colonization Society, January 14, 1833* (Cincinnati: F.S. Benton, 1833).
23. For instance, the Republican *Holmes County Farmer* (OH), viewed colonization as impractical due to both expense and time, and that it required the consent of both slaveholders and Black people. November 6, 1862.
24. Eugene H. Berwanger, *The Frontier Against Slavery: Western Anti-Negro Prejudice and the Slavery Extension Controversy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1967), 52–53; Emma Lou Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana Before 1900: A Study of a Minority* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Press, 1957), 82, 138–39.
25. Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790–1860* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 272–73.
26. Fredrickson, *Black Image*, 20.
27. Foner, *Free Soil*, 267–80.

28. P. T. Chapman, *A History of Johnson County, Illinois* (Herrin, IL: Herrin News, 1925), 216–17.
29. Eric Foner, *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010), 135.
30. Foner, *Free Soil*, 269–80.
31. "Coolie Labor," *Cincinnati Gazette*, reprinted in *Anti–Slavery Bugle*, March 21, 1857.
32. Lawrence M. Lipin, *Producers, Proletarians, and Politicians*: *Workers and Party Politics in Evansville and New Albany, Indiana, 1850–1887* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 99, 125. This was the case despite Germans being well represented throughout the city's class structure; Joe William Trotter Jr., *River Jordan: African American Urban Life in the Ohio Valley* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 17. Brian Butler estimates that Evansville's labor force was over one-third German in 1850. In the neighboring community of Lamasco, annexed by the city in 1857, Germans comprised roughly 60 percent of the labor force. *An Undergrowth of Folly: Public Order, Race Anxiety, and the 1903 Evansville, Indiana, Riot* (New York: Garland, 2000), 22.
33. Trotter, *River Jordan*, 20–22.
34. *Chicago Press and Tribune*, February 16, 1860, and February 25, 1860; Nikki M. Taylor, *Frontiers of Freedom: Cincinnati's Black Community, 1802–1868* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), 24–27.
35. For one incident of anti–Irish violence in rural southwestern Indiana, see Gil R. Stormont, *History of Gibson County, Indiana* (Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen, 1914), 98.
36. David Brody, *In Labor's Cause: Main Themes on the History of the American Worker* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 50.
37. Ignatiev, *Irish*, 34–36; David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991), 133–43. See also, Dale T. Knobel, *Paddy and the Republic: Ethnicity and Nationality in Antebellum America* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1986).
38. Fredrickson, *Black Image*, 322.
39. *Daily City Gate*, November 3, 1856; Michael S. Green, *Freedom, Union, and Power: Lincoln and His Party during the Civil War* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 336; Jacob Piatt Dunn, *Indiana: A Redemption from Slavery* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1905), 471–72; Will Cumback and J. B. Maynard, eds., *Men of Progress, Indiana* (Indianapolis: Indiana Sentinel, 1899), 40.
40. *Evansville Journal*, June 14, 1860.
41. Peck, *Antislavery Nation*, 10.
42. Foner, *Free Soil*, 266.
43. *Chicago Press and Tribune*, March 14, 1860.
44. Richard Lyle Power, *Planting Corn Belt Culture: The Impress of Upland Southerner and Yankee in the Old Northwest* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1953), 83. In some cases, Republicans referred to southern Illinois simply as "Africa" owing to its Egyptian nickname and the backwardness of its inhabitants and their majority party.
45. Berwanger, *Frontier*, 130–31; *New York Tribune*, May 12, 1856.
46. "Senator Trumbull in Ohio," reprinted from *Meigs County Telegraph*, n.d., BV 1, LTS, LTFP.
47. "Senator Trumbull in Ohio," reprinted from *Cincinnati Commercial*, n.d., BV 1, LTS,

LTFP; see also "Remarks of Hon. Lyman Trumbull in the State Senate, January 7, 1859," Box 1, Folder 2, LTFP.

48. "Democracy and Republicanism: The Negro Equality Doctrine Exposed," *Chicago Times and Herald*, September 22, 1860, BV 1, LTS, LTFP.
49. "Speech of Hon. Lyman Trumbull," *St. Louis Daily Democrat*, n.d., BV 1, LTS, LTFP. Trumbull mocked the idea that Democrats were "non–interventionists." Both parties were "interventionists," he claimed, with Republicans willing to "intervene" on behalf of freedom and Democrats on behalf of slavery.
50. *The National Era*, September 2, 1858.
51. *Cadiz Sentinel Democratic*, August 27, 1857.
52. "Democracy and Republicanism: The Negro Equality Doctrine Exposed," *Chicago Times and Herald*, September 22, 1860, BV 1, LTS, LTFP.
53. *McArthur Democrat*, August 4, 1859.
54. Berwanger, *Frontier*, 129.
55. *Indiana State Sentinel*, June 26, 1856.
56. "Grand Mass Meeting of the Democracy," *Missouri Republican*, n.d., BV 1, LTS, LTFP.
57. On conservative Republicans and their influence in the Lower Midwest, see Foner, *Free Soil*, 186–205; on early Republican appeals to conservatism, see Adam I. P. Smith, *The Stormy Present: Conservatism and the Problem of Slavery in Northern Politics, 1846–1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 92–95, 138–58.
58. Daniel J. Ryan, *The Civil War Literature of Ohio* (Cleveland, OH: Burrows Brothers, 1911), 74.
59. See Daniel W. Crofts, *Lincoln and the Politics of Slavery: The Other Thirteenth Amendment and the Struggle to Save the Union* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016).
60. Thomas Corwin, *Speeches of Thomas Corwin*, ed. Isaac Strohm (Dayton, OH: William Comly, 1859), 455, 511. Corwin supported the expansion of and federal protection for slavery both where it existed and in new territories or colonies "where the white man cannot work." Josiah Morrow, ed., *Life and Speeches of Thomas Corwin: Orator, Lawyer, and Statesman* (Cincinnati, OH: W. H. Anderson, 1896), 416, 447–48.
61. Corwin, *Speeches*, 436.
62. Fredrickson, *Black Image*, 102–129.
63. Henry Field James, *Abolitionism Unveiled!* (Cincinnati, OH: E. Morgan and Sons, 1856), 121; Mark Reinhardt, *Who Speaks for Margaret Garner? The True Story that Inspired Toni Morrison's* Beloved (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 251.
64. Alonzo M. Ward, "The Specter of Black Labor: African American Workers in Illinois Before the Great Migration, 1847 to 1910," PhD dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2017, 93, 98–99.
65. David T. Dixon, *Radical Warrior: August Willich's Journey from German Revolutionary to Union General* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2020), 116–18.
66. *Jonesboro Gazette*, December 3, 1859.
67. *Cincinnati Gazette* reprinted in *Fremont Journal*, October 17, 1856.
68. On the exploitation of racial difference as central to capitalism, see David A. Roed-

iger and Elizabeth D. Esch, *The Production of Difference: Race and the Management of Labor in U.S. History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

69. Hartigan, *Odd Tribes*, 62.
70. Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (New York: Miller, Orton, & Co., 1857), 344.
71. Hinton Rowan Helper, *Compendium of the Impending Crisis of the South* (New York: A. B. Burdick, 1860), 18, 23–24. On poor whites in the Old South, see Keri Leigh Merritt, *Masterless Men: Poor Whites and Slavery in the Antebellum South* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
72. John E. Cairnes, *Slave Power: Its Character, Career, and Probable Design* (London: Parker, Son, and Bourn, 1862), 54–55.
73. Hall, *Letters*, 143.
74. George M. Weston, *The Poor Whites of the South* (Washington, D.C.: Buell and Blanchard, 1856), 7; Fredrickson, *Black Image*, 154–55.
75. D. R. Hundley, *Social Relations in Our Southern States* (New York: H.B. Price, 1860), 257.
76. Foner, *Free Soil*, 40–47.
77. Eric Michael Burke, "Egyptian Darkness: Antebellum Reconstruction, 'Republicanization,' and Southern Illinois in the Republican Imagination, 1854–61," *Civil War History* 67 (September 2021): 167–99.
78. Reprinted in *Holmes County Republican*, November 20, 1856.
79. *Cadiz Sentinel*, December 24, 1856.
80. Reprinted in *Lewisburg Chronicle*, November 26, 1858; *Holmes County Republican*, November 20, 1856.
81. *Lewisburg Chronicle*, November 26, 1858.
82. *National Era*, January 15, 1857.
83. *Chicago Press and Tribune*, January 28, 1860.
84. *Chicago Press and Tribune*, February 28, 1860.
85. *National Era*, January 15, 1857.
86. Davis, *Frontier Illinois*, 289.
87. September 27, 1853, and May 5, 1858, John Kirk Letterbooks, Chicago Historical Society.
88. Burke, "Egyptian Darkness," 185.
89. *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 30, 1860.
90. *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 30, 1862.
91. Hartigan, "Whiteness," 66.
92. Burke, "Egyptian Darkness," 183–185.
93. Hartigan, "Whiteness," 66.
94. Ibid., 58.
95. *Ashtabula Weekly Telegraph*, July 12, 1862.
96. Kenneth J. Winkle's study of voter turnout in Ohio between 1850 and 1860 suggests that while electoral turnover was extremely high—"the active electorate at the local level was a constantly shifting assortment of voters"— electoral participation correlated more with wealth and occupational status than with age, nativity, or urban/rural residence. "A Social Analysis of Voter Turnout in Ohio, 1850–1860," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 13 (Winter 1983): 411–35.
97. *National Era*, October 30, 1856.

98. *Evansville Daily Journal*, August 2, 1859.
99. *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 30, 1860.
100. William E. Gienapp, *The Origins of the Republican Party, 1852–1856* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 428–29.
101. Ibid., 431.
102. *Chicago Press and Tribune*, August 29, 1860.
103. Burke, "Egyptian Darkness."
104. *Ashtabula Weekly*, July 7, 1860.
105. *Lewisburg Chronicle*, November 26, 1858.
106. *Ashtabula Weekly*, July 7, 1860.
107. *Cleveland Morning Leader*, February 9, 1860.
108. Power, *Planting*, 84.
109. *Chicago Press and Tribune*, January 28, 1860.
110. *Chicago Tribune*, July 4, 1870.
111. Roediger, *Wages*, 170.
112. *Marshall County Democrat*, August 18, 1859.
113. On the upsurge of Republican claims to being the "white man's party" in mid-1860, see Berwanger, *Frontier*, 132–33; *Daily Gate City*, September 29, 1860. Keokuk's Republican *Daily City Gate* also advocated a permanent separation of the races on account of biological distinctions—"the tropics" being the "natural habitat" for people of African descent. This insistence that Black people could not "naturally" acclimate to cold weather became a way for wartime Republicans to support emancipation while also insisting that its effects would not upset Midwestern racial demographics. July 19, 1860; Berwanger, *Frontier*, 131.
114. *Tiffin Weekly Tribune*, August 10, 1860.
115. Reprinted in *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, January 13, 1860.
116. *Anti-Slavery Bugle*, August 11, 1860; *Weekly Minnesotian and Times*, March 26, 1860.
117. "Appointment of Carl Schurz," *Evansville Daily Journal*, August 9, 1860. On liberal nationalism among German émigrés, including its congruency with racial conservatism, see Alison Clarke Efford, *German Immigrants, Race, and Citizenship in the Civil War Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); and Zachary S. Garrison, *German Americans on the Middle Border: From Antislavery to Reconciliation, 1830–1877* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2020).
118. "Carl Schurz at Mozart Hall," *Evansville Daily Journal*, August 20, 1860. On the development of Mozart Hall, see Gilbert, *Evansville*, 99–100.
119. *Evansville Daily Journal*, August 8, 1860.
120. *Evansville Daily Journal*, July 25, 1860; see also "Competition Between Free and Slave Labor," *Evansville Daily Journal*, August 24, 1860; "White Slavery," *Evansville Daily Journal*, October 15, 1860. Conservative Republicans used the terms "free labor," "free white labor," "free white men," and "white slavery" interchangeably. I estimate that in the lead-up to Lincoln's election, between August and early November 1860, the *Journal* ran eighteen articles discussing some form of "white" free labor and eighteen referencing "free labor" without the racial qualifier.
121. "The Niggerism of the Secession Movement," *Cincinnati Commercial*, March 16, 1861; Charles R. Wilson, "Cincinnati's Reputation during the Civil War," *Journal of Southern History* 2 (November 1936): 473–74. Despite Lincoln's victory in No-

vember, Cincinnatians elected a Democratic-Union ticket to City Hall on April 1, 1861. The new mayor, George Hatch, backed the Crittenden Compromise and the *Cincinnati Enquirer*'s position of "Union by conciliation" rather than "disunion by civil war." *Cincinnati Enquirer*, March 24, 1861.

122. Charles Zimmerman, "The Origin and Rise of the Republican Party in Indiana from 1854 to 1860," *Indiana Magazine of History* 13 (September 1917): 381.
123. In Evansville, Lincoln polled strikingly better in disproportionately native-born and middle-class upper wards than in largely German lower wards and rural townships. Kenneth M. Stampp, *Indiana Politics During the Civil War* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1949), 48.

Part 2: Dumping Ground

1. Anne E. Marshall, *Creating a Confederate Kentucky: The Lost Cause and Civil War Memory in a Border State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 49–50.
2. Petroleum V. Nasby [David Ross Locke], *The Struggles: Social, Financial, and Political] of Petroleum V. Nasby* (Boston: I. N. Richardson and Co., 1872), 149.
3. Petroleum V. Nasby [David Ross Locke], *The Nasby Papers: Letters and Sermons Containing Views on the Topics of the Day* (Indianapolis: C. O. Perrine & Co., 1864), 6.
4. Ibid., 3–4.
5. Ibid., 22–23.
6. Petroleum V. Nasby [David Ross Locke], *Ekkoes from Kentucky* (Boston: Lee & Shepard, 1888), 11, 22, 214.
7. Ibid., 310.
8. Nasby, *Papers*, 24–25.
9. Nasby, *Struggles*, 207, 416.
10. Christopher Phillips, *The Rivers Ran Backward: The Civil War and the Remaking of the American Middle Border* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 299, 309–10.
11. Nancy Isenberg, *White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America* (New York: Viking, 2016), 167; Orville Vernon Burton, *The Age of Lincoln* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), 106; Eric Foner, *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010), 180.
12. N.a., *For Peace and Peaceable Separation: Citizen's Democratic Address to the People of the State of Ohio, and the People of the Several States of the West and North* (Cincinnati: The Author, 1863), 25.
13. Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1965), 193.
14. David Williams, *A People's History of the Civil War: Struggles for the Meaning of Freedom* (New York: New Press, 2005), 109.
15. Kevin B. Anderson, *Marx at the Margins: On Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Non-Western Societies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 103–4. Similarly, Engels wrote to Karl Marx on November 15, 1862: "The only apparent effect of Lincoln's emancipation so far is that the Northwest has voted Democrat for fear of being overrun by Negroes."
16. *Cincinnati Enquirer*, April 18, 1862.
17. *Indiana State Sentinel*, October 17, 1862.

18. George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1971), 134–35.
19. David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991), 171.
20. V. Jacque Voegeli, *Free but Not Equal: The Midwest and the Negro during the Civil War* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 65.
21. Ibid., 15; Eugene H. Berwanger, *The Frontier Against Slavery: Western Anti-Negro Prejudice and the Slavery Extension Controversy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1967), 37.
22. Berwanger, *Frontier*, 36.

Chapter 3: No More Banks and No More Negroes

1. "Workingmen's Union Meeting," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, January 5, 1861; see also Stephen J. Ross, *Workers on the Edge: Work, Leisure, and Politics in Industrializing Cincinnati, 1788–1890* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 189–92.
2. For how this fracture played out in one New England community, see Alan Dawley, *Class and Community: The Industrial Revolution in Lynn* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976).
3. Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States,* vol. 1: *From Colonial Times to the Founding of the American Federation of Labor* (New York: International Publishers, 1947), 298.
4. "Meeting of the Working-Men," *Cincinnati Daily Press*, January 4, 1861; Ross, *Workers*, 189–90.
5. Foner, *Labor Movement,* vol. 1, 299–312.
6. "The Mississippi Cannot Be Closed," *Evansville Journal*, January 14, 1861.
7. Richard F. Nation, *At Home in the Hoosier Hills: Agriculture, Politics, and Religion in Southern Indiana 1810–1870* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 207; Bigham, *Towns and Villages*, 134; *Barre Daily Times*, July 14, 1903.
8. *Evansville Journal*, May 9, 1863; *Camden Confederate*, May 11, 1864.
9. *Burlington Weekly Hawkeye*, May 9, 1863.
10. David Montgomery, *Beyond Equality: Labor and the Radical Republicans, 1862–1872* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1967), 48–50.
11. *Chicago Tribune*, August 26, 1862.
12. *Cincinnati Enquirer*, reprinted in *Ashland Union*, March 4, 1863.
13. *Wood County Reporter*, April 23, 1863.
14. *Indiana Sentinel*, reprinted in *Fremont Journal*, August 22, 1862.
15. November 16 and 17, 1862, Nathan T. Fuller Diary, IHS.
16. See, for instance, James S. Thomas to sister Laura, March 11, 1863, James S. Thomas Letters, IHS; John A. Wilkins to sister, March 29 and 30, 1863, John A. Wilkins Letters, IHS; and William R. Stuckey to Helen Stuckey, July 28, 1863, William R. Stuckey Letters, IHS.
17. *Cedar Falls Gazette*, August 22, 1862.
18. *Burlington Weekly Hawkeye*, October 3, and October 31, 1863; James E. Toner to father, April 2, 1864, James E. Toner Letters, Indiana State Library; See also, Peter J. Barry, "The Charleston Riot and its Aftermath: Civil, Military, and Presidential Responses," *Journal of Illinois History* 7 (Summer 2004): 82–106.

19. N.a., *Wayne and Clay Counties*, 356–57.
20. Matthew Salafia, *Slavery's Borderland: Freedom and Bondage Along the Ohio River* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 216.
21. *Cincinnati Enquirer,* reprinted in *Ashland Union*, March 4, 1863.
22. Albert Matthews, *Origin of Butternut and Copperhead* (Cambridge, MA: John Wilson and Son, 1918), 213.
23. *Cincinnati Enquirer,* reprinted in *Ashland Union*, March 4, 1863.
24. *Spirit of Democracy*, February 25, 1863.
25. John Hartigan Jr., *Odd Tribes: Toward a Cultural Analysis of White People* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 21.
26. George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1971), 229.
27. *Evansville Journal*, November 8, 1860. On Hendricks's warnings to southern Indianans, see *Evansville Journal*, August 20, 1860.
28. Brian Butler, *An Undergrowth of Folly: Public Order, Race Anxiety, and the 1903 Evansville, Indiana Riot* (New York: Garland, 2000), 62.
29. Frank L. Klement, *The Copperheads in the Middle West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 3–6.
30. Frank L. Klement, "Middle Western Copperheadism and the Genesis of the Granger Movement," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 38 (March 1952): 679–94. On connections between Copperheadism and Greenbackism, see Klement, *Copperheads*, 102, 251, 253, 266. Pointing out that few leading Midwestern Greenbacks had Copperhead origins, and that Greenbackism was often strongest in heavily Republican counties in northern Illinois, Ronald P. Formisano and William G. Shade have convincingly challenged the Greenback component of what they call Klement's "Jacksonian–Copperhead–Greenback thesis." However, this crucial detail does not detract from the salience of Klement's broader arguments about the economics of Midwestern Copperheadism. See, Formisano and Shade, "The Concept of Agrarian Radicalism," in Klement, *Lincoln's Critics: The Copperheads of the North* (Shippensburg, PA: White Mane Books), 64–81.
31. Ira Berlin, Thavolia Glymph et al., eds., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861–1867,* Series I, vol. 3: *The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor: The Lower South* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 29.
32. Leslie A. Schwalm, "'Overrun with Free Negroes': Emancipation and Wartime Migration in the Upper Midwest," *Civil War History* 50 (June 2004): 145–74.
33. Frank L. Klement, *Lincoln's Critics: The Copperheads of the North* (Shippensburg, PA: White Mane Books), 54; *Juliet Signal*, October 22, 1861.
34. *Indiana State Sentinel*, April 19, 1862.
35. "Ohio Becoming Africanized," *Portsmouth Times,* reprinted in *Indiana State Sentinel*, April 19, 1862.
36. "Negro Paupers Northward," *New Albany Weekly Ledger*, January 7, 1863.
37. *Indianapolis Sentinel*, April 29, 1862.
38. Klement, *Lincoln's Critics*, 69.
39. Arthur Charles Cole, *The Era of the Civil War, 1848–1870* (reprint, Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries, 1971), 269.
40. Klement, *Lincoln's Critics*, 59. See also, Stanley L. Jones, "Agrarian Radicalism in

Illinois' Constitutional Convention of 1862," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 48 (Autumn 1955): 271–82.

41. Klement, *Lincoln's Critics*, 88.
42. *Jonesboro Gazette*, May 31, 1862.
43. Cole, *Civil War*, 269.
44. "Is Illinois to be Africanized?," *Illinois State Register*, September 29, 1862.
45. "The Panic Increasing," *Indiana Daily Sentinel*, April 29, 1862.
46. "The Question of Negro Residence," *Galena Courier,* reprinted in *Jonesboro Gazette*, May 10, 1862.
47. Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
48. *Jonesboro Gazette*, May 31, 1862.
49. "Nigger in the Woodpile," *Chicago Tribune*, July 1, 1862.
50. "White Men's Wages Reduced by Abolition," *Daily Ohio Statesman*, June 22, 1862.
51. "The Colonization Swindle," *New Albany Weekly Ledger*, October 15, 1862.
52. *Holmes County Farmer*, November 6, 1862.
53. *Daily Ohio Statesman*, October 30, 1862.
54. "The Question of Negro Residence," *Galena Courier,* reprinted in *Jonesboro Gazette*, May 10, 1862.
55. *Indianapolis Daily Journal*, July 13, 1864.
56. *Cadiz Democratic Sentinel*, June 11, 1862.
57. Karl Marx, "Abolitionist Demonstrations in America," in Robin Blackburn, *An Unfinished Revolution: Karl Marx and Abraham Lincoln* (London: Verso, 2011), 175.
58. David R. Roediger, *Seizing Freedom: Slave Emancipation and Liberty for All* (New York: Verso, 2014), 12.
59. T. K. Kionka, *Key Command: Ulysses S. Grant's District of Cairo* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006).
60. John A. McClernand, General Order No. 3, Folder 8, Box 3, John A. McClernand Papers (JAMP), Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library (ALPL), Springfield, Illinois.
61. John A. McClernand to W. H. L. Wallace, September 18, 1861, Folder 8, Box 3, JAMP.
62. Chandra Manning, *Troubled Refuge: Struggling for Freedom in the Civil War* (New York: Vintage, 2017), 111.
63. Mark Hubbard, ed., *Illinois's War: The Civil War in Documents* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2013), 80. The largest total influx in the Lower Midwest occurred in Cincinnati, whose Black population nearly doubled during the war. Joe William Trotter Jr., *River Jordan: African American Urban Life in the Ohio Valley* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 56. The largest proportional increase transpired in Pulaski County, Illinois, where the Black population multiplied over 6,000 percent between 1860 and 1870 and came to comprise over one quarter of the county. Neighboring Alexander County saw similar growth. Edgar F. Raines, "The Ku Klux Klan in Illinois, 1867–1875," *Illinois Historical Journal* 78 (Spring 1985): 24.
64. Edward Noyes, "The Contraband Camp at Cairo," in *Historical Papers: Selected Proceedings of the Sixth Northern Great Plains History Conference*, ed. Lysle E. Meyer (Moorhead, MN: n.p., 1972): 203–17; Manning, *Troubled Refuge*, 129.
65. C. Marsh letter, September 21, 1861, Folder 11, Box 3, JAMP.
66. Hubbard, *Illinois's War*, 94.

67. Victor Hicken, *Illinois in the Civil War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966), 129.
68. "How Western Troops Receive the Emancipation Proclamation," *Jonesboro Gazette*, October 11, 1862.
69. Alonzo M. Ward, "The Specter of Black Labor: African American Workers in Illinois Before the Great Migration, 1847 to 1910," PhD dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2017, 113.
70. V. Jacque Voegeli, *Free but Not Equal: The Midwest and the Negro during the Civil War* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 87.
71. Ibid., 181.
72. Ibid., 65.
73. Charles R. Wilson, "Cincinnati's Reputation during the Civil War," *Journal of Southern History* 2 (November 1936): 477.
74. Leonard Harding, "The Cincinnati Riots of 1862," *Bulletin of the Cincinnati Historical Society* 25 (October 1967): 230n5.
75. "Wendell Phillips Riot at Pike Opera House," *Covington Journal*, March 29, 1862.
76. "Contemptible," *Evansville Journal*, July 25, 1862.
77. Harding, "Cincinnati," 228–39. Harding calls the riot "an exaggeration of the existing conditions of decline in the steamboat industry, rather than an episodic fluctuation in the business cycle." On competition between Irish and Black levee workers, see *Cincinnati Enquirer*, July 18, 1862.
78. Black Cincinnatians were victims of another riot the following month. See "Another Riot Between Irish and Negroes," *Cincinnati Gazette*, reprinted in *New York Herald*, August 27, 1862.
79. Peter H. Clark, *Black Brigade of Cincinnati: Being a Report of Its Labor and a Muster-Roll of Its Members* (Cincinnati: Joseph B. Boyd, 1864), 3–4.
80. Voegeli, *Not Equal*, 88.
81. *New Albany Daily Ledger*, July 22, 1862.
82. "Rioting in New Albany," *Indiana State Sentinel*, July 28, 1862.
83. Emma Lou Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana Before 1900: A Study of a Minority* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Press, 1957), 185–187.
84. Voegeli, *Not Equal*, 88.
85. "The Senatorial Revolutionists," *New Albany Weekly Ledger*, January 14, 1863.
86. *New Albany Weekly Ledger*, January 14, 1863.
87. "Is Illinois to Be Africanized?," *Illinois State Register*, September 29, 1862.
88. William H. Wadsworth, *Speech of Hon. William H. Wadsworth, of Kentucky, on the Enlistment of Negro Soldiers, Delivered in the House of Representatives, January 30, 1863* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Globe, 1863), 8.
89. Joseph A. Wright, *Speech of Hon. J. A. Wright, of Indiana, on Slavery in the District of Columbia* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Globe, 1862), 1–8.
90. On emancipation as benefiting the "northern part of the state" while harming the "middle and lower parts," see *Illinois State Register*, October 8, 1862.
91. *New Albany Daily Ledger*, January 7, 1863.
92. *Philadelphia Enquirer,* reprinted in *New Albany Daily Ledger*, September 25, 1862.
93. *Salem Advocate*, October 23, 1862.
94. *Evansville Journal*, September 10, 1862.
95. Voegeli, *Not Equal*, 87, 180–81.

96. Ibid., 176.
97. Fredrickson, *Black Image*, 160.
98. N. B. Buford to Jacob Ammen, April 1, 1863, Jacob Ammen Papers (JAP), ALPL.
99. J. F. Dunn to Jacob Ammen, April 25, 1863, JAP.
100. Edwin M. Stanton to N. B. Buford, April 21, 1863, JAP.
101. Raines, "Ku Klux Klan," 24; See also, Edgar F. Raines, "The Ku Klux Klan in Illinois, 1867–1875," unpublished manuscript, IHS, 10–11.
102. N.a., *History of*, 170–73.
103. Voegeli, *Not Equal*, 89.
104. United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (*OR*), Series II, vol. 5 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1899), 521–22. Burford's men reportedly arrested twenty-one vigilantes in Anna in April 1863.
105. Rhonda M. Kohl, *The Prairie Boys Go to War: The Fifth Illinois Cavalry, 1861–1865* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2013), 4–5, 103.
106. Emily Wiley to Benjamin L. Wiley, April 5 and April 9, 1863, Box 1, Folder 43, Benjamin L. Wiley Papers, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois.
107. For the Democratic response to Lincoln's message, see *Jonesboro Gazette*, December 13, 1862; on emancipation as "revolution," see "Influx of Negroes," *Chicago Times,* reprinted in *Jonesboro Gazette*, October 18, 1862; *Jonesboro Gazette*, November 22, 1862; and January 10, 1863.
108. *Jonesboro Gazette*, November 1 and 15, 1862.
109. Walter S. Waggoner, *Copperheads, Black Republicans, and Bushwhackers: Pike County, Illinois and the Civil War* (Quincy, IL: Windmill Publications, 1999), 63.
110. Hubbard, *Illinois's War*, 95–96.
111. "Niggers," *Jonesboro Gazette*, October 18, 1862.
112. Hubbard, *Illinois's War*, 98.
113. Ibid., 80.
114. John A. McClernand to Edwin M. Stanton, November 10, 1862, *OR*, vol. 17, 332–34.
115. "A Reconstruction of the Union," *Jonesboro Gazette*, January 3, 1863.
116. Stephen L. Hansen, *The Making of the Third Party System: Voters and Parties in Illinois, 1850–1876* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research, 1978), 134.
117. Reprinted in *Evansville Journal*, November 6, 1862.
118. "The Niggers Must Go," *Belleville Weekly Advocate*, August 8, 1862.
119. Berlin et al., *Freedom,* Series I, vol. 3, 29.
120. V. Jacque Voegeli, "A Rejected Alternative: Union Policy and the Relocation of Southern 'Contrabands' at the Dawn of Emancipation," *Journal of Southern History* 69 (November 2003): 765–90; Voegeli, *Not Equal*, 111.
121. *Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States, Third Session of the Thirty-Seventh Congress, December 1, 1862* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1863), 26.

Chapter 4: Turning Black

1. William H. Ross to brother, September 30, October 15, and November 2, 1862; February 2 and 18, 1863, William H. Ross Papers, Chicago Historical Society (CHS).
2. On the Union to emancipation narrative as applied to Union soldiers, see Chan-

dra Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (New York: Knopf, 2007), 12–13; James Oakes, *Freedom National: The Destruction of Slavery in the United States* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2013), 347–48; and Matthew E. Stanley, *The Loyal West: Civil War and Reunion in Middle America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017), 205n8; Brian Matthew Jordan refers to Manning's depiction of Union soldiers as "abolitionized." *Marching Home: Union Veterans and their Unending Civil War* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2015), 3.

3. Stephen A. Miller to home, January 31, 1863, Stephen A. Miller Papers, Indiana Historical Society (IHS), Indianapolis, Indiana.
4. Letter to Joseph P. Vannest, February 23, 1863, Joseph P. Vannest Letters, IHS.
5. Robert Perry Hoge Diary, p. 14, CHS.
6. Robert Perry Hoge, January 29, 1863, Robert Perry Hoge Diary (RPHD), CHS.
7. John J. Lynch to cousin, February 17, 1863, John J. Lynch letter, CHS.
8. Richard F. Nation, *At Home in the Hoosier Hills: Agriculture, Politics, and Religion in Southern Indiana 1810–1870* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 215.
9. Jasper Barney letter, October 24, 1862, John C. Dinsmore Papers (JCDP), Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library (ALPL), Springfield, Illinois.
10. P. W. McCreery letter, April 17, 1865, IHS.
11. Bruce S. Allardice, "'Illinois Is Rotten with Traitors!': The Republican Defeat in the 1862 State Election," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 104 (Spring–Summer 2011): 101–11. Allardice, like many observers at the time, estimates that Republicans would have held the state majority had Union soldiers been able to vote; see also Robert I. Girardi, " 'I am for the President's Proclamation teeth and toe nails': Illinois Soldiers Respond to the Emancipation Proclamation," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 106 (Fall–Winter 2013): 409–10.
12. *Illinois State Register*, January 7, 1863.
13. *Speech of Hon. W.J. Allen of Illinois, on State Rights and Federal Wrongs* (Washington, D.C.: L. Towers & Co., 1863), 1–8.
14. A. D. Duff, *Arbitrary Arrests in Illinois: Letter of Judge A. D. Duff of Franklin County to the Public of South Illinois* (Springfield, IL: State Register, 1863).
15. Robert I. Girardi finds that the highest number of Illinois desertions occurred between October 1862 and January 1863, with most of the entire war occurring in October. However, desertions proved highly concentrated, and more than forty percent of desertions occurred in just six regiments. "President's Proclamation," 406.
16. Mark Hubbard, ed., *Illinois's War: The Civil War in Documents* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2013), 109.
17. Andrew Bush letter, January 20 and February 11, 1863, Andrew Bush Letters, Indiana State Library (ISL), Indianapolis, Indiana.
18. George F. Chittenden letter, February 8, 1863, George F. Chittenden Letters, ISL.
19. Carlos W. Colby to sister, January 21, 1863, Carlos W. Colby letter, Newberry Library (NL), Chicago, Illinois.
20. V. Jacque Voegeli, *Free but Not Equal: The Midwest and the Negro during the Civil War* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 82.
21. Jonathan W. White, *Emancipation, the Union Army, and the Reelection of Abraham Lincoln* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2014), 90–97. See also, T. Harry Williams, "Voters in Blue: The Citizen Soldiers of the Civil War," *Journal of American History* 31 (September 1944): 200–201.

22. Don G. and Virginia E. Fehrenbacher, eds., *Recollected Words of Abraham Lincoln* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 434.
23. Emma Lou Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana Before 1900: A Study of a Minority* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Press, 1957), 193–194.
24. Copied excerpts from the *Congressional Globe*, May 1864, Benjamin Wilson Smith Papers, IHS.
25. James P. Jones, *Black Jack Logan: John A. Logan and Southern Illinois in the Civil War Era* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967), 51.
26. White, *Emancipation*, 86.
27. Arthur Charles Cole, *The Era of the Civil War, 1848–1870*, reprint (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries, 1971), 306; Victor Hicken, *Illinois in the Civil War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966), 140; Jon Musgrave, ed., *The Bloody Vendetta of Southern Illinois* (Marion, IL: IllinoisHistory.com, 2006), 183.
28. On the southern origins of the 109th and 128th Illinois regiments, see Stanley, *Loyal West*, 208n78 and n82.
29. George E. Parks, "One Story of the 109th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 41 (Summer 1963): 287.
30. George E. Parks, "One Story of the 109th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 41 (Summer 1963): 288.
31. Special Order No. 58, December 31, 1862, *OR*, vol. 17, 511. Company K, which hailed from Pulaski rather than Union County, was seemingly exempt from the order.
32. White, *Emancipation*, 201n50; Thomas Mears Eddy, *The Patriotism of Illinois,* vol. 2 (Chicago: Clarke & Co., 1866), 396.
33. Military Service Records of the One Hundred and Ninth Illinois Infantry, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.
34. Girardi, "Proclamation," 406.
35. *Evansville Daily Journal*, January 31, 1863.
36. "A Disloyal Plot Detected," *Chicago Tribune*, reprinted in the *Evansville Journal*, January 31, 1863.
37. Perrin, *History*, 329–33.
38. Voegeli, *Not Equal*, 77–78.
39. *Chicago Tribune*, September 3, 1863.
40. Wabash County Bicentennial Project, *History of Wabash County, Illinois* (Mt. Carmel, IL: Mt. Carmel Public Library, 1976), 495; Howard Zinn, *The Other Civil War: Slavery and Struggle in Civil War America* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2011), 41; David Williams, *I Freed Myself: African American Self–Emancipation in the Civil War Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 152.
41. Ambrose Burnside to Jacob Ammen, April 18, 1863,; and Ammen to N. H. McLean, April 23, 1863, Jacob Ammen Papers, ALPL.
42. Musgrave, *Vendetta*, 78, 26.
43. *Chicago Tribune*, April 12, 1864.
44. Musgrave, *Vendetta*, 182–86.
45. William Orr letters, December 21 and 24, 1862, January 7, 1863, and September 11 and 18, 1864, Orr Family Papers, Lilly Library, Indiana University.
46. Gideon Viars letters, February 8, February 16, and February 17, 1863, Viars Family Papers, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky.

47. Edwin Royce letter, May 10, 1863, Indiana History Papers, Lilly Library (LL), Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.
48. Joe William Trotter, Jr., *River Jordan: African American Urban Life in the Ohio Valley* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 55.
49. George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1971), 169.
50. Ibid.
51. *Jonesboro Gazette*, February 28, 1863.
52. For an example of this argument as it relates to Illinois soldiers, see Girardi, "Proclamation," 396. Aaron Astor likewise maintains that Border South whites viewed Black soldiering as the greater threat, and that Black enlistment, even more than emancipation, led to a retreat from conservative Unionism in Kentucky. This makes sense in societies with larger free Black populations that were predicated more on racial domination than racial aversion. *Rebels on the Border: Civil War, Emancipation, and the Reconstruction of Kentucky and Missouri* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012), 121–45. Michael Vorenberg also suggests that Black enlistment was more disruptive to social relations in the Border South than in the Midwest in *Final Freedom: The Civil War, the Abolition of Slavery, and the Thirteenth Amendment* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 168.
53. Fredrickson, *Black Image*, 167.
54. "Republican Advice to White Men," *Indiana State Sentinel*, July 26, 1862.
55. Fredrickson, *Black Image*, 158.
56. Andrew Bush letter, March 26, 1863, Andrew Bush Letters, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana.
57. Mary P. Caplinger to Leonard T. Caplinger, April 22, 1863, Leonard T. Caplinger Papers, Huntington Library, Pasadena, California.
58. *Cannelton Reporter,* reprinted in the *Evansville Journal*, August 19, 1863.
59. *Cincinnati Gazette,* reprinted in *Indiana State Sentinel*, July 26, 1862.
60. *Philadelphia Press,* reprinted in *Gallipolis Journal*, June 2, 1864.
61. "An Advance on the Negro Question," *Evansville Journal*, March 7, 1865.
62. Cyrus T. Cochran letter, February 18, 1863, Cyrus T. Cochran Papers, ALPL.
63. James B. Woollard letter, February 2, 1863, James B. Woollard Papers, ALPL.
64. *Evansville Journal*, May 2, 1863.
65. Girardi, "Proclamation," 411–12.
66. Daniel M. Points letter, February 23, 1863, ALPL.
67. John Lucas Harding letters, October 23 and December 24, 1862, and August 4, 1863, Harding Papers, LL.
68. Paul M. Angle, ed., *Three Years in the Army of the Cumberland: The Letters and Diary of Major James A. Connolly* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959), 58.
69. Kristopher A. Teeters, *Practical Liberators: Union Officers in the Western Theater during the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018); Anne Sarah Rubin also recognizes that William Tecumseh Sherman's western troops were "frequently uncomfortable with their role as liberators" in *Through the Heart of Dixie: Sherman's March and American Memory* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 6.
70. On "belated Confederatism," see Astor, *Rebels*; on Kentucky's adoption of Confeder-

ate memory, see Anne E. Marshall, *Creating a Confederate Kentucky: The Lost Cause and Civil War Memory in a Border State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

71. George Henry Weeks letter, May 8, 1863, George Henry Weeks Letters, Kentucky Library and Museum, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky.
72. Jacob Behm, "Emancipation: A Soldier's View," *Civil War Times Illustrated* 21 (February 1983), 46–47.
73. Stanley, *Loyal West*, 59.
74. Thomas F. Miller to Benjamin Newton, January 21, 1863, Thomas F. Miller Letters, ALPL.
75. John C. Dinsmore letter, November 5, 1863, JCDP, ALPL.
76. Dinsmore, June 8, 1863, JCDP.
77. Dinsmore, October 24, 1862, JCDP.
78. High Talmadge Lefler, *Hinton Rowan Helper: Advocate of a "White America"* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1935), 38.
79. Conservative Republicans in Illinois were still hoping to secure Panama as a location for Black colonization in the fall of 1862. See Samuel C. Pomeroy to Orville Hickman Browning, October 27, 1862, Orville Hickman Browning Papers, ALPL.
80. Fredrickson, *Black Image*, 166–67.
81. The Act reserved almost 50 million acres in the Deep South for freedpeople and loyal whites, though it failed to produce permanent land ownership for all but a small percentage of families owing to bureaucratic disorganization, the non-arability of the available land, farmers being locked into existing contracts, and the expense and danger of travel in the midst of Southern Black Codes. Claude F. Oubre, *Forty Acres and a Mule: The Freedmen's Bureau and Black Land Ownership* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), 84–85.
82. Fredrickson, *Black Image*, 171–72.
83. David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991), xxiii.
84. "Statistics of Miscegenation," *Richmond Palladium*, May 11, 1864; "Artful Dodging," *Evansville Journal*, June 14, 1864.
85. *Jasper Weekly Courier*, March 12, 1864. The editor consistently decried "abolition miscegens," and cited the reluctance of freedpeople in the Caribbean to grow cash crops as evidence that "emancipated African will not work."
86. Voegeli, *Not Equal*, 77.
87. Forrest G. Wood, *Black Scare: The Racist Response to Emancipation and Reconstruction* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1970), 75.
88. Andre Fleche, "America's First Red Scare," *Jacobin* 18 (Summer 2015): 33.
89. Frank L. Klement, *The Limits of Dissent: Clement L. Vallandigham and the Civil War* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1970), 107.
90. Hardin Edwards to George Edwards, December 28, 1861, George Edwards Papers, IHS.
91. See, for example, Union Congressional Committee, *George H. Pendleton, The Copperhead Candidate for Vice President* (Washington, D.C.: Union Congressional Committee, 1864).
92. Samuel S. Cox, *Puritanism in Politics: Speech of Hon. S. S. Cox of Ohio* (New York: Van Evrie, Horton, 1863), 107.

93. Britt E. Halvorson and Joshua O. Reno, *Imagining the Heartland: White Supremacy and the American Midwest* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2022), 11–12. This myth developed in the nineteenth century in response to immigration, urbanization, and industrial capitalism, and eventually coded the Midwest as normative, pastoral, and white.
94. James Addison Cravens letter, February 22, 1863, James Addison Cravens Papers, LL.
95. Edward Conrad Smith, *The Borderland in the Civil War* (New York: Macmillan, 1927), 323.
96. Frank L. Klement, *Dark Lanterns: Secret Political Societies, Conspiracies, and Treason Trials in the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 187–88.
97. "Who Pays the War Taxes?," *Dayton Daily Empire*, October 25, 1864.
98. *Fincher's Trades' Review*, June 20, 1863.
99. Klement, *Lincoln's Critics*, 50.
100. *Jonesboro Gazette*, February 7, 1863, and April 4, 1863; and "Sentiments of the Soldiers in the Field," March 21, 1863.
101. *Evansville Journal*, February 28, 1863.
102. *Cairo City Weekly Gazette*, October 23, 1862.
103. "Apathy Among Workingmen," *Fincher's Trades' Review*, August 29, 1863.
104. Voegeli, *Not Equal*, 127.
105. Ibid., 130.
106. Frank L. Klement, *Dark Lanterns: Secret Political Societies, Conspiracies, and Treason Trials in the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 188.
107. *Illinois State Register*, October 24, 1862.
108. "The Character of the War," *Jonesboro Gazette*, February 7, 1863.
109. *Jonesboro Gazette*, November 1, 1862.
110. Ford Risley, *Civil War Journalism* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2012), 97. The *Illinois State Register* and the *Jonesboro Gazette* were among the dozens of Midwestern newspapers shuttered by Union officials for "treasonous and poisonous" publication. Authorities also shut down Indiana's leading Democratic newspaper, the *Indiana State Sentinel*, and arrested its editor, Joseph J. Bingham, for conspiracy.
111. T. A. Young letter, January 16, 1865, ALPL.
112. On Meeker's letters, see *New York Tribune*, August 1, 1920.
113. Jasper William Cross, Jr., "Divided Loyalties in Southern Illinois during the Civil War," MA Thesis, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 1942, 6.
114. Barbara Burr, ed., "Letters from Two Wars," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 30 (April, 1937): 154–57.
115. Voegeli, *Not Equal*, 179.
116. Ibid., 164.
117. See, for example, Charles W. Wills, *Army Life of an Illinois Soldier, Including a Day-by-Day Record of Sherman's March to the Sea*, ed. Mary E. Kellogg (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996), 195.
118. On the growth of the wartime working class, see Mark A. Lause, *Free Labor: The Civil War and the Making of the American Working Class* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015).
119. Noel Ignatiev, *Treason to Whiteness Is Loyalty to Humanity* (New York: Verso, 2022), 89.

120. "A Traitor's Peace," broadside,published by the New York Workingmen's Democratic Republican Association, ALPL; Lause, *Free Labor*, 27.
121. "Emancipation in Maryland," *Chicago Tribune*, November 3, 1863.
122. James P. Grossman, *William Sylvis: Pioneer of American Labor* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945), 140.
123. "The Louisville Decoy," *Fincher's Trades' Review*, November 14, 1863.
124. "Address of the Iron Founders," *Fincher's Trades' Review*, October 3, 1863.
125. Edwin E. Witte, "Early American Labor Cases," *Yale Law Journal* 35 (May 1926): 825–37; Cedric de Leon, *The Origins of Right to Work: Antilabor Democracy in Nineteenth-Century Chicago* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 100–101.
126. David Williams, *A People's History of the Civil War: Struggles for the Meaning of Freedom* (New York: The New Press, 2005), 122. On socialist tailors in St. Louis demanding equal wages for women, see Mark A. Lause, "Wartime Employment," in Lisa Tendrich Frank, ed., *Women in the American Civil War*, vol. 1 (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC–CLIO, 2008), 85; John R. Commons et al., *History of Labour in the United States*, vol. 2 (New York: Macmillan, 1918), 17.
127. "True Men and Parasites," *Fincher's Trades' Review*, November 21, 1863.
128. "The Practical Equalization of Labor," *Fincher's Trades' Review*, October 17, 1863.
129. "To the Mechanics of America," *Fincher's Trades' Review*, October 31, 1863.
130. David A. Zonderman, "White Workers and the American Civil War," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History*, https://oxfordre.com/americanhistory/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.001.0001/acrefore–9780199329175–e–805, 17.
131. Mark A. Lause, *Price's Lost Campaign: The 1864 Invasion of Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011), 89; Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States,* vol. 1, *From Colonial Times to the Founding of the American Federation of Labor* (New York: International Publishers, 1947), 328; David Montgomery, *Beyond Equality: Labor and the Radical Republicans, 1862–1872* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1967), 100.
132. Williams, *People's History*, 124.
133. Grossman, *Sylvis*, 223.
134. Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 130.
135. "Read, White Men, Read!," *Dayton Daily Empire*, April 2, 1864.
136. Montgomery, *Beyond Equality*, 101–9.
137. *Evansville Journal*, November 10 and 12, 1864. Forty-one percent of Vanderburgh County's 1860 population was foreign born and nearly half spoke German as their primary language. Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1965), 546.
138. *Chicago Tribune*, July 30, 1862.
139. Matthew E. Stanley, *The Loyal West: Civil War and Reunion in Middle America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017), 96.
140. Foner, *Labor Movement,* vol. 1, 331.
141. William T. Sherman to Willard Warner, February 16, 1867, William T. Sherman Letters, ALPL.

Part 3: The Ghost of Negro Competition

1. "The Working Men," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, August 16, 1876; "Workingmen's Meeting," *Cincinnati Daily Star*, August 16, 1876.

2. Beyond its base in Cincinnati, SLP branches in Evansville and Terre Haute, Indiana, and Belleville, Collinsville, and Mt. Carmel Illinois, ran slates of candidates.
3. Philip S. Foner, *The Workingmen's Party of the United States: A History of the First Marxist Party in the Americas* (Minneapolis: MEP Publications, 1994), 114.
4. "Communistic Workingmen," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, March 6, 1877.
5. For the fullest account of Clark, see Nikki M. Taylor, *America's First Black Socialist: The Radical Life of Peter H. Clark* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2013). On Clark's socialist philosophy, see Lorenzo Costaguta, *Workers of All Colors Unite: Race and the Origins of American Socialism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2023), 106–13.
6. Foner, *Workingmen's Party*, 51.
7. "The Workingmen," *Cincinnati Daily Star*, March 27, 1877.
8. Wendell P. Dabney, *Cincinnati's Colored Citizens* (Cincinnati: Dabney Publishing, 1926), 108.
9. Foner, *Workingmen's Party*, 78–79.
10. "The Socialistic Meeting," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, July 23, 1877.
11. Foner, *Workingmen's Party*, 47–49. The WPUS had ignored race issues at its unity congress in July 1876, and Black members were rarely referred to by name in the socialist press.
12. Herbert G. Gutman, "Peter H. Clark: Pioneer Negro Socialist, 1877," *Journal of Negro History* 34 (Autumn 1965): 413–18; "Workingmen's Convention," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, August 10, 1877.
13. Jacqueline Jones, *American Work: Four Centuries of Black and White Labor* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1988), 275.
14. Britt E. Halvorson and Joshua O. Reno, *Imagining the Heartland: White Supremacy and the American Midwest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2022), 18.
15. Alonzo M. Ward, "The Specter of Black Labor: African American Workers in Illinois Before the Great Migration, 1847 to 1910," PhD dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2017, 141, 154.
16. Noel Ignatiev, *Treason to Whiteness Is Loyalty to Humanity* (New York: Verso, 2022), 151.
17. "Louisville," *Evansville Journal*, December 9, 1877.
18. "The New Party and the Workingmen," *Evansville Courier*, September 9, 1877.
19. C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877–1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951); Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

Chapter 5: The Ghastly Shadow

1. "From Southern Illinois," *Finchers' Trades' Review*, July 15, 1865.
2. "The Age of Justice," *Finchers' Trades' Review*, August 26, 1865.
3. David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991), 169–170.
4. Alonzo M. Ward, "The Specter of Black Labor: African American Workers in Illinois Before the Great Migration, 1847 to 1910," PhD dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2017, 166–167.
5. Joe William Trotter, Jr., *River Jordan: African American Urban Life in the Ohio Valley* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 65.

6. See, for instance, "White vs. Colored Labor," *Workingman's Advocate*, March 6, 1875.
7. In St. Louis, white veterans drove from the levee a Black crowd that had assembled to commemorate West Indian emancipation, reportedly killing several freedpeople. "Negro Troubles," *State Rights Democrat*, October 7, 1865.
8. "Trouble in the West," *Public Ledger*, March 23, 1867.
9. David Montgomery, *Beyond Equality: Labor and the Radical Republicans, 1862-1872* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1967), 76.
10. "Workingmen!," *Evansville Journal*, February 20, 1866; *Evansville Journal*, March 22 and March 24, 1866.
11. Matthew E. Stanley, *The Loyal West: Civil War and Reunion in Middle America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017), 183–89.
12. David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865–1925* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 70–71; United States Census Office, *A Compendium of the Ninth Census, June 1, 1870* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1872), 40, https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1872/dec/1870e.html. On precarity, migrancy, and danger as inherent to the early miners' experience, see Charles Evans, *16th Annual Report of the State Coal Mine Inspector of the State of Missouri for the Year 1902* (Jefferson City, MO: Tribune Printing Co., 1902), 13–14.
13. James Allan Reid, *The Greater Belleville, St. Clair County, Illinois* (Belleville, IL: J.A. Reid, 1910), 28; Carl R. Weinberg, *Labor, Loyalty, and Rebellion: Southwestern Illinois Coal Miners and World War I* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005), 13.
14. Howard W. Allen and Vincent A. Lacey, eds., *Illinois Elections, 1818–1990: Candidates and County Returns for President, Governor, Senate, and House of Representatives* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992), 145.
15. U.S.C.O., *Ninth Census*, 818–19; Thomas J. McCormack, ed., *Memoirs of Gustav Koerner, 1809–1896*, vol. 2 (Cedar Rapids, IA: Torch Press, 1909), 671; Reid, *Belleville*, 28.
16. Edward A. Wieck, *The American Miners' Association: A Record of the Origin of Coal Miners' Unions in the United States* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1940), 55, 95.
17. Ibid., 97.
18. Ibid., 207.
19. Ibid., 211.
20. Daniel Weaver, "Address to the Miners on the Necessity of Association," in Wieck, *Association*, 217–19. See also Rosemary Feurer, "Contesting 'the Insatiable Maw of Capital': Miner Workers' Struggles in the Civil War Era," *Civil War History* 70 (September 2024): 17–42.
21. Weaver, "Address to the Miners on the Necessity of Association," 217–19.
22. Wieck, *Association*, 84–85.
23. George E. McNeill et al., *The Labor Movement: The Problem of Today* (New York: M. W. Hazen, 1888), 246–48. Earlier efforts to organize miners, most notably in 1857 and 1858, occurred only at the district level.
24. "Combination of Coal Miners," *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, August 27, 1864.
25. Wieck, *Association*, 118–34.
26. Wieck argues that, unlike St. Louis, whose business community was largely hostile

to worker organization, Belleville's more intimate social networks and "liberal cultural background" prevented a concerted and successful professional class alignment against the miners. *Association*, 71, 187–88.

27. "Combination of Coal Miners," *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, August 27, 1864; "Legislative Proceedings," *Pittsburgh Daily Commercial*, February 8 and 11, 1865; Frank Julian Warne, "The Union Movement Among Coal-Mine Workers," *Bulletin of the Bureau of Labor* 51 (March 1904): 381.
28. "From St. Louis," *Chicago Tribune*, February 9, 1863; United States Bureau of Labor, *Third Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor, 1888: Strikes and Lockouts* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1888), 1047. The AMA sent the Belgians away and paid their travel expenses.
29. Mark Hubbard, ed., *Illinois's War: The Civil War in Documents* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2013), 154.
30. Weaver, "Address to the Miners on the Necessity of Association," 217–19; though difficult to prove, Andrew Roy posits that "no class of Americans" responded more swiftly to Lincoln's call for volunteers in April 1861. *A History of the Coal Miners of the United States* (Columbus, OH: J. L. Traugher Printing Company, 1903), 42.
31. "War Meeting at Alma Mines" and "The Volunteering Movement," *Belleville Weekly Advocate*, August 8, 1862.
32. Wieck, *Association*, 112–17, 209.
33. When the Knights of Labor held their sixteenth general convention in St. Louis in November 1892, Terence Powderly made sure to cross the river and give a speech to the noted workingmen of Belleville. *Belleville Semi-Weekly Advocate*, November 18, 1892; Although local lodges, such as the one in LaSalle, survived after 1867, the details of the Association's decline in Illinois are obscure. See Wieck, *Association*, 178–85.
34. *Belleville Semi-Weekly Advocate*, February 22, 1878; "Strongest Individual Labor Union in the World," *Inter-Ocean*, August 21, 1904; "Shorter Work Week Urged," *Belleville News-Democrat*, June 19, 1939. There was renewed interest in the AMA during the New Deal era, particularly following Edward Wieck's 1941 study. Wieck argued that, even by the increasingly inclusive militant standards of the 1930s, the AMA was "a strikingly modern trade union." He asserted that much of the Association's positive legacy lay in its function as a feeder into other movements. "Just how many lodges survived the break-up, and how effectively they were able to function, is a matter of conjecture," Wieck contended, "but the presence of representatives from a number of them in the annual meetings of the National Labor Union in the last half of the sixties reveals at once their existence and the spirit of the men who kept them alive." Wieck, *Association*, 184–202. In fact, AMA lodges sent delegates to National Labor Congress meetings into the 1870s. See "National Labor Congress," *San Francisco Examiner*, August 25, 1870, and "First Miners' Union Was Model," *Belleville Daily Advocate*, March 8, 1941;
35. H. Charles Ulman, *Lawyers' Record and Official Register of the United States* (New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1872), 433.
36. "American Labor Portraits—No. 9," *Workingman's Advocate*, March 14, 1874; N.a., *History of St. Clair County, Illinois* (Philadelphia: Brink, McDonough, and Co., 1881), 107; John H. M. Laslett, *Colliers Across the Sea: A Comparative Study of Class Formation in Scotland and the American Midwest, 1830–1924* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 163.

37. Wieck, *Association*, 196.
38. David Montgomery, *Beyond Equality: Labor and the Radical Republicans, 1862–1872* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1967), 217–18.
39. Laslett, *Colliers*, 163.
40. Samuel W. White, *Fragile Alliances: Labor and Politics in Evansville, Indiana, 1919–1955* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2005), 17–18; "Workingmen's Convention," *Evansville Journal*, November 29, 1865.
41. "The Mass Meeting," *Evansville Journal*, July 24, 1877.
42. Obadiah Hicks, *The Life of Richard F. Trevellick* (Joliet, IL: J. E. Williams, 1896), 47.
43. "A Foretaste of What Is Coming—Contrabands," *Spirit of Democracy*, June 18, 1862. On white perceptions of Black workers as "cheap," see Sterling D. Spero and Abram L. Harris, *The Black Worker: The Negro and the Labor Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), 290.
44. "Labor Reform: Grand Meeting at Belleville, Ill.," *Workingman's Advocate*, July 9, 1870.
45. William H. Sylvis and James C. Sylvis, *The Life, Speeches, Labors, and Essays of William H. Sylvis* (Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen, and Haffelfinger, 1872), 123.
46. *Gallipolis Journal*, October 14, 1869; "Gov. Seymour and the Coolies," *Cairo Bulletin*, August 16, 1870; "The Chinese Question," *Cairo Bulletin*, August 3, 1869.
47. Jonathan P. Grossman, *William Sylvis: Pioneer of American Labor* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945), 229–32. As Grossman asserts, Sylvis "did not realize that the Republican party, even though its program had attracted the rising financial and industrial plutocracy, represented to a larger degree than any other party of the time the special needs, the desires and the aspirations of the freedmen."
48. Philip S. Foner, *The Workingmen's Party of the United States: A History of the First Marxist Party in the Americas* (Minneapolis, MN: MEP Publications, 1994), 48.
49. "The Other Side," *Workingman's Advocate*, November 11, 1871.
50. Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States,* vol. 1: *From Colonial Times to the Founding of the American Federation of Labor* (New York: International Publishers, 1947), 389–94.
51. Wieck, *Association*, 258.
52. *Workingman's Advocate*, January 2, 1869.
53. "Hocking Valley Outrage," *Workingman's Advocate*, June 20, 1874.
54. "The Other Side," *Workingman's Advocate*, November 11, 1871.
55. *Workingman's Advocate*, June 15, 1872.
56. "The Miner," *Workingman's Advocate*, February 5, 1870.
57. "From Illinois," *Workingman's Advocate*, April 23, 1870.
58. "Miners' National Convention," *Workingman's Advocate*, October 25, 1873.
59. "Colored Labor," *Workingman's Advocate*, February 7, 1874; see also, John R. Commons et al., *Documentary History of American Industrial Society* 9 (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clarke, 1910), 159–60.
60. "Fifteenth Amendment," *Workingman's Advocate*, May 7, 1870.
61. "White vs. Colored Labor," *Workingman's Advocate*, March 6, 1875.
62. Frederick Douglass, *Address to the People of the United States, Delivered to a Convention of Colored Men, Louisville, Kentucky, September 24, 1883* (Louisville, KY: Courier-Journal Job Print Co., 1883).
63. Commons, *Labour*, 146.

64. Herbert G. Gutman, "Reconstruction in Ohio: Negroes in the Hocking Valley Coal Mines in 1873 and 1874," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 3 (Fall 1962): 243.
65. *Workingman's Advocate*, October 10, 1868.
66. Noel Ignatiev, *Treason to Whiteness Is Loyalty to Humanity* (New York: Verso, 2022), 154.
67. Foner, *Labor Movement,* vol. 1, 375.
68. On future workingmen's meetings in Belleville, see, for instance, "From Southern Illinois," *Workingman's Advocate*, June 13, 1874.
69. Clifton J. Phillips, *Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880–1920* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1968), 276; Lawrence M. Lipin, *Producers, Proletarians, and Politicians*: *Workers and Party Politics in Evansville and New Albany, Indiana, 1850–1887* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 10.
70. For the example of Norris City, Illinois, see *Montgomery Tribune*, December 4, 1908.
71. Emma Lou Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana before 1900: A Study of a Minority* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Press, 1957), 225–26.
72. Elliot G. Jaspin, *Buried in the Bitter Waters: The Hidden History of Racial Cleansing in America* (New York: Basic Books, 2007), 15–29. Newspapers commented regularly on Washington's sundown reputation. See "Singular Isolation," *Richmond Item*, October 24, 1903.
73. Thornbrough, *Negro*, 208.
74. Ibid., 209.
75. "To the Editor," *Fincher's Trades' Review*, July 15, 1865.
76. *Evansville Journal*, July 31 and August 1, 1865.
77. Lipin, *Producers*, 106, 129–30.
78. Brian Butler, *An Undergrowth of Folly: Public Order, Race Anxiety, and the 1903 Evansville, Indiana Riot* (New York: Garland, 2000), 68–69.
79. Brent M. S. Campney, *Hostile Heartland: Racism, Repression, and Resistance in the Midwest* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2019), 56–57.
80. *New Albany Daily Ledger*, August 3, 1865.
81. Butler, *Undergrowth*, 69.
82. Ibid., 70.
83. *Chicago Tribune*, August 15, 1865.
84. Edward L. Ayers, *Vengeance and Justice: Crime and Punishment in the 19th–Century American South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 232; Fredrickson, *Black Image*, 256–82.
85. "Recorder's Court," *Evansville Journal*, March 26, 1869.
86. Butler, *Undergrowth*, 71–72, 129, 141. See also, "Capt. Cochran's Report," *Evansville Journal*, August 4, 1868.
87. "Recorder's Court," *Evansville Journal*, April 12, 1869; *Evansville Journal*, April 8, 1870.
88. "Visible Admixture Bill," *Hancock Jeffersonian*, June 5, 1868. The court determined that men with "an admixture of African blood . . . but in whom white blood predominates" were equal citizens who possessed the same rights as men of "pure white blood."
89. Thornbrough, *Negro*, 272–73.
90. "Negro Labor," *Workingman's Advocate*, April 25, 1868.

91. *Dayton Daily Empire*, September 16, 1865.
92. "White Boys in Blue," *Plymouth Weekly*, May 7, 1868.
93. "Great Conservative Soldiers' Meeting," *Evansville Journal*, August 26, 1868.
94. "A Representative Man," *Evansville Journal*, June 3, 1868. Republican newspapers described the White Boys as opponents of the newly formed (and largely Republican) Grand Army of the Republic, *Daily Ohio Statesman* (Columbus), October 5 and 27, 1868; Thornbrough, *Negro*, 292–93.
95. "White Boys in Blue," *Jasper Weekly Courier*, September 11, 1868. One campaign song, published in Indiana, promised that the White Boys marching would "cause the reds to tremble."
96. "The White Boys in Blue," *New York Herald*, September 2, 1868.
97. "White Boys in Blue," *Evansville Journal*, May 23, 1868.
98. Wood, *Black Scare*, 1.
99. Thornbrough, *Negro*, 246.
100. *Evansville Courier*, reprinted in *Indianapolis Daily Sentinel*, March 11, 1869; The Black population in Vanderburgh County as a whole jumped from 127 to 2,151. In neighboring Warrick County it increased from nineteen to more than five hundred. See U.S. Census Office, *Ninth Census*.
101. *Evansville Courier*, August 19, 1880.
102. "The Struggle," reprinted in the *Evansville Journal*, August 2, 1865.
103. "The Result of Negro Suffrage," *Spirit of Democracy*, October 12, 1869. On how the Fifteenth Amendment would also lead to unwanted equality for "mulattos," "Chinese," and "gipsies," see also October 5, 1869.
104. Eva Ingersoll Wakefield, ed., *The Letters of Robert G. Ingersoll* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), 149.
105. *Cambria Freeman*, August 17, 1871.
106. "Spirit of the Farmers," *Evansville Journal*, June 17, 1873.
107. "A Successful Strike," *Workingman's Advocate*, April 22, 1871.
108. "Du Quoin," *Workingman's Advocate*, August 19, 1871.
109. "Coal Miners' Strike," *Anti-Monopolist*, November 12, 1874.
110. Montgomery, *House of Labor*, 45–46.
111. Miners organized an AMA lodge at St. Johns in March 1870. "From Illinois," *Workingman's Advocate*, May 27, 1871.
112. Darcy G. Richardson argues that "the Greenback movement had taken shape in the Land of Lincoln long before it was organized elsewhere." *Others: Third Parties During the Populist Period* (Lincoln, NE: IUniverse, 2007), 35.
113. Steward ran nearly twenty thousand votes ahead of his party. N.a., *Prominent Democrats of Illinois* (Chicago: Democrat Publishing, 1899), 58.
114. Gretchen Ritter, *Goldbugs and Greenbacks: The Antimonopoly Tradition and the Politics of Finance in America, 1865–1896* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 131–32; Theodore Calvin Pease, *The Story of Illinois* (Chicago: McClung, 1925), 297–99.
115. *Chicago Tribune*, January 11, 1861.
116. James P. Jones, *Black Jack Logan: John A. Logan and Southern Illinois in the Civil War Era* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967), 134.
117. *Chicago Tribune*, March 2, 1864.
118. "From Egypt," *Chicago Tribune*, April 30, 1864.

119. "The Springfield Convention," *Chicago Tribune*, May 27, 1864.
120. "Southern Illinois," *Chicago Tribune*, May 31, 1864.
121. *Chicago Tribune*, August 11, 1864.
122. "Egypt," *Chicago Tribune*, November 13, 1866.
123. *Chicago Tribune*, November 12, 1864.
124. "Egypt," *Chicago Tribune*, November 13, 1866.
125. Green B. Raum, *History of Illinois Republicanism* (Chicago: Rollins Publishing Company, 1900), 304.
126. *Chicago Tribune*, February 28, 1867.
127. Raum, *Republicanism*, 302–4; Andrew J. Kuykendall, *Reconstruction. Speech of Hon. A. J. Kuykendall of Illinois, March 3, 1866* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Globe, 1866), 7.
128. Andrew J. Kuykendall, *Capital and Labor, Speech of Hon. A. J. Kuykendall of Ill., Delivered in the House of Representatives, January 18, 1867* (Washington, D.C.: McGill & Witherow, 1867). Kuykendall also opposed protective tariffs as favoring bondholders over producers. On a continent of seemingly limitless natural resources, he thought it possible to manufacture cheaper and more abundantly than Europe under a system of "honest" and dignified labor without tariffs.
129. Montgomery, *Beyond Equality*, 438–39.
130. Edward Kellogg, *Labor and Other Capital* (New York: The Author, 1849).
131. Foner, *Labor Movement,* vol. 1, 420–32.
132. Ibid., 420–23; See also, James S. Allen, *Reconstruction: The Battle for Democracy* (New York: International Publishers, 1937), 151–53.
133. Philip S. Foner and Ronald Lewis, eds., *The Black Worker During the Era of the National Labor Union* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978), 8; William Z. Foster, *History of the Communist Party of the United States* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1968) 57.
134. "National Labor Congress—Its Duties and Responsibilities," *Workingman's Advocate*, August 17, 1867; "Proceedings of the National Labor Congress," *Workingman's Advocate*, August 24, 1867.
135. *Chicago Tribune*, November 18, 1867.
136. Jehu Baker, *Three of the Great Issues: Letter of Jehu Baker, of Illinois, to his Constituents* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Globe Office, 1868).
137. Earl M. Maltz, *Civil Rights, the Constitution, and Congress, 1863–1869* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1990), 128; Pippa Holloway, *Living in Infamy: Felon Disfranchisement and the History of American Citizenship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 37.
138. "Labor Reform," *Workingmen's Advocate*, July 9, 1870; "From Illinois," *Workingmen's Advocate*, April 12, 1873.
139. William A. Mirola, *Redeeming Time: Protestantism and Chicago's Eight-Hour Movement, 1866–1912* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 67.
140. Montgomery, *Beyond Equality*, 305–306.
141. John B. Jentz and Richard Schneirov, *Chicago in the Age of Capital: Class, Politics, and Democracy during the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 100–109.
142. "The Eight-Hour Movement," *Chicago Tribune*, May 2, 1867.
143. "Southern Illinois," *Chicago Tribune*, May 6, 1867.

144. "National Labor Union," *Chicago Tribune*, August 26, 1867.
145. Allen, *Reconstruction*, 154.
146. "Proceedings of the National Labor Congress," *Workingman's Advocate*, August 24, 1867; "National Labor Congress," *Chicago Post*, August 23, 1867.
147. Foner, *Labor Movement,* vol. 1, 427.
148. *Chicago Tribune*, March 5, 1866; "Civil Rights Bill," *Chicago Tribune*, March 17, 1866.
149. "Negro Inequality in the District of Columbia," *Rock Island Daily Argus*, January 22 and January 26, 1866; "Actual Reconstruction Inaugurated," *Chicago Tribune*, March 3, 1867.
150. "The Reconstruction Bill," *Nashville Journal*, February 28, 1867; *Cairo Evening Bulletin*, August 14, 1869.
151. "Logan vs. Kuykendall," *Chicago Tribune*, May 8, 1866.
152. *Chicago Tribune*, August 11, 1864.
153. Kuykendall, *Capital and Labor*, 16.
154. Raum, *Republicanism*, 302–4; Kuykendall, *Reconstruction*, 7.
155. "Southern Illinois," *Chicago Tribune*, May 6, 1867.
156. "Egypt," *Chicago Tribune*, November 13, 1866.
157. Ritter, *Goldbugs*, 132.
158. *Cairo Bulletin*, November 8, 1873, and August 14, 1874; "Illinois State Bar Association," *Rock Island Daily Argus*, December 12, 1877; Logan reportedly said of Kuykendall, "If we beat 'em with Jack Kuykendall this time, we can beat 'em with a jackass next time!" *Cairo Bulletin*, April 2, 1878.
159. *Cairo Bulletin*, October 16, 1874; *Cairo Bulletin*, November 5, 1878.
160. Jentz, *Chicago*, 109.
161. "Cheap Labor," *Workingmen's Advocate*, April 30, 1870.
162. Mike Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream: Politics and Economy in the History of the U.S. Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1986), 29.
163. Richardson, *Others*, 36.

Chapter 6: Exorcizing the Ghost

1. Charles E. Robert, *Evansville: Her Commerce and Manufactures* (Evansville, IN: Courier Company, 1874), 518.
2. *Evansville Courier*, February 26, 1886; "Bricklayers' Union," *Evansville Courier*, April 30, 1886; "The Parade Yesterday" and "Working Men in Line," *Evansville Courier*, May 2, 1886; "An Atrocious Insult," *Evansville Courier*, May 3, 1886.
3. James Green, *Death in the Haymarket: A Story of Chicago, the First Labor Movement, and the Bombing that Divided Gilded Age America* (New York: Pantheon, 2006), 202.
4. See, Lawrence M. Lipin, *Producers, Proletarians, and Politicians*: *Workers and Party Politics in Evansville and New Albany, Indiana, 1850–1887* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 166–78; As Montgomery notes, "The capacity of America's political structure to absorb talent from the working classes was perhaps the most effective deterrent to the maturing revolutionary class-consciousness among the nation's workers," and the ability of working-class activists to ascend within the two–party system "militated against the successful development of a definite Labor party." Friedrich A. Sorge referred to non-worker "labor reformers" who entered labor circles through "bourgeois parties" as "carpetbaggers." *Beyond Equality: Labor*

and the Radical Republicans, 1862–1872 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1967), 215–19.

5. Clifton J. Phillips, *Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880–1920* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1968), 4.
6. *Evansville Journal*, December 1, 1870.
7. Lipin, *Producers*, 78, 132–33.
8. Clifton J. Phillips, *Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880–1920* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1968), 93; Samuel W. White, *Fragile Alliances: Labor and Politics in Evansville, Indiana, 1919-1955* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2005), 18–19; "The Labor Question," *Evansville Journal*, July 31, 1865.
9. Robin Blackburn, *An Unfinished Revolution: Karl Marx and Abraham Lincoln* (London: Verso, 2011), 246.
10. *Workingman's Advocate*, June 15, 1872.
11. "White vs. Colored Labor," *Workingman's Advocate*, March 6, 1875.
12. Jon Musgrave, ed., *The Bloody Vendetta of Southern Illinois* (Marion, IL: IllinoisHistory.com, 2006), 28–29.
13. Darrel E. Bigham, *Towns and Villages of the Lower Ohio* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 143.
14. Felice A. Bonadio, *North of Reconstruction: Ohio Politics, 1865–1870* (New York: New York University Press, 1970), 79–110.
15. *Richmond Palladium*, October 12, 1872; Phillips, *Indiana*, 11.
16. Alonzo M. Ward, "The Specter of Black Labor: African American Workers in Illinois Before the Great Migration, 1847 to 1910," PhD dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2017, 182.
17. Shirley J. Carlson, "The Black Community in the Rural North: Pulaski County, Illinois, 1890–1900" (PhD diss., Washington University, 1982).
18. Benjamin Franklin Mason Ledgers, 1865–1899, Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois.
19. Howard W. Allen and Vincent A. Lacey, eds., *Illinois Elections, 1818–1990: Candidates and County Returns for President, Governor, Senate, and House of Representatives* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992), 187.
20. 1878 represented the Greenback high-water mark in Indiana, and Greenbackers won a higher percentage of the vote than would the more nationally prominent People's Party of the early 1890s. Phillips, *Indiana*, 39. On "Log Rollers," see *Workingman's Advocate*, August 26, 1876.
21. Allen, *Illinois Elections*, 188–93. Counties with considerable Greenback support in the late 1870s tended to support the Populist Party at higher rates in 1892. Clay, Hardin, Jefferson, Johnson, Pope, and Wayne counties were among the strongest Populist counties in Illinois, 220–22.
22. Richard W. Townshend, "Speech in the House of Representatives, May 11, 1878," *Congressional Record*, 45th Congress, *2nd Session,* vol. 7 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1878), 3397–3402.
23. "Coolie Labor," *Chicago Tribune*, July 22, 1869; February 25, 1879; and June 10, 1880.
24. David R. Roediger, *Seizing Freedom: Slave Emancipation and Liberty for All* (New York: Verso, 2014), 21; Emma Lou Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana Before 1900: A Study of a Minority* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Press, 1957), 315.
25. Thornbrough, *Negro*, 314.

26. *Elk County Advocate*, September 4, 1873.
27. Richard Lyle Power, *Planting Corn Belt Culture: The Impress of Upland Southerner and Yankee in the Old Northwest* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1953), 35.
28. Edgard F. Raines, "The Ku Klux Klan in Illinois, 1867–1875," *Illinois Historical Journal* 78 (Spring 1985): 24.
29. *Evansville Journal*, August 4, 1869.
30. Raines, "Ku Klux Klan," 21.
31. *New York Sun,* reprinted in *Millheim Journal*, January 17, 1878.
32. Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 198; *Chicago Tribune*, July 4, 1870.
33. *Chicago Tribune*, August 15, 1876. Although early Republicans had indeed sought to transform the region, the source of "Egypt" as a descriptor predated the Third Party System and did not have partisan roots. While vague in origin, the epithet was probably in common usage by the early 1830s.
34. Mark Kruger, *The St. Louis Commune of 1877: Communism in the Heartland* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2021), 235.
35. "The Great Strike," *Cairo Bulletin*, July 27, 1877.
36. "No Temporizing," *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, July 28, 1877.
37. "The Strikers," *Cairo Bulletin*, July 31, 1877; "Roustabouts Strike at Cairo," *Los Angeles Evening Express*, July 31, 1877.
38. Although trade unions and socialist organizations in both St. Louis and East St. Louis had previously made no effort to either include or recruit Black workers, they participated as both strikers and stump speakers. See Philip S. Foner, *The Great Labor Uprising of 1877* (New York: Pathfinder, 1977), 236, 245.
39. Mark Kruger, *The St. Louis Commune of 1877: Communism in the Heartland* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2021), 10–11.
40. Walter Johnson, *The Broken Heart of America: St. Louis and the Violent History of the United States* (New York: Basic Books, 2020), 155–59.
41. Leon Fink, *Workingmen's Democracy: The Knights of Labor and American Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), xii. See also Robert E. Weir, *Beyond Labor's Veil: The Culture of the Knights of Labor* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996).
42. Alex Gourevitch, *From Slavery to the Cooperative Commonwealth: Labor and Republican Liberty in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 5–6; "Action Looking to the Repeal of Objectionable Laws," *Evansville Journal*, January 27, 1883.
43. Fink, *Workingmen's Democracy*, 28–29.
44. Connersville, IN," *John Swinton's Paper*, December 20, 1885; "Farmers," *John Swinton's Paper*, November 8, 1885.
45. Mike Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream: Politics and Economy in the History of the U.S. Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1986), 32.
46. David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991), 44.
47. See Melton A. McLaurin, *The Knights of Labor in the South* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978).
48. As was typical, Evansville's local Grand Army of the Republic and Women's Relief

Corps chapters organized in racially segregated posts. Although most of Evansville's craft unions either unofficially barred Blacks or forced them to unionize in separate bodies, others, including the Potters Union No. 5, were interracial. See "Trade Organizations," *Evansville Journal*, May 19, 1900.

49. Cayton, *Ohio*, 187; William Form, *Segmented Labor, Fractured Politics: Labor Politics in American Life* (New York: Plenum Press, 1995), 98; Commons, *History of Labour,* vol. 2, 464–65. Altogether, Cincinnati featured ninety-one different local assemblies between 1877 and 1893. See Jonathan Garlock, *Guide to the Local Assemblies of the Knights of Labor* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982), 380–84.
50. T. Thomas Fortune, *Black and White: Land, Labor, and Politics in the South* (New York: Fords, Howard, and Hulbert, 1884); Rebecca Hill, *Men, Mobs, and Law: Anti-Lynching and Labor Defense in U.S. Radical History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 109–10.
51. "A Colored Delegate for Cincinnati," *John Swinton's Paper*, January 9, 1887.
52. Darcy G. Richardson, *Others: Third Parties during the Populist Period* (Lincoln, NE: IUniverse, 2007), 32–33.
53. "The Cincinnati Conference," *John Swinton's Paper*, February 27, 1887.
54. "Union Labor Party," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, February 24, 1887.
55. *New Albany Ledger,* reprinted in *Evansville Journal*, April 1, 1886.
56. White, *Alliances*, 18–19.
57. Garlock, *Guide*, 63–92.
58. "List of L.A.s," *Journal of United Labor* 1 (May 13, 1880): 4–7; *Belleville Semi–Weekly Advocate*, May 29, 1891; "Fourth of July," *Belleville Semi-Weekly Advocate*, July 8, 1887.
59. Garlock, *Guide*, 63–92.
60. "Among Our Neighbors," *Olney Advocate*, March 11, 1887.
61. University of Washington Mapping Social Movements Project, "Knights of Labor History and Geography, 1869–1899," https://depts.washington.edu/moves/knights_labor_map.shtml.
62. Joseph Gerteis, *Class and the Color Line: Interracial Class Coalition in the Knights of Labor and the Populist Movement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 35.
63. "Crushing the Great Order," *John Swinton's Paper*, March 7, 1886.
64. "The Knights of Labor," *Mt. Carmel Republican*, May 7, 1886; "The Knights of Labor," *Mt. Carmel Register*, May 13, 1886.
65. "Discharging Knights of Labor," *Evansville Journal*, March 14, 1886.
66. *Evansville Journal*, January 5, 1886.
67. "Immigration Statistic," *Journal of the Knights of Labor*, February 2, 1893. Extreme K of L hostility toward Chinese in the West is well documented. See Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti–Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971). Anti-immigrant exclusionary rhetoric was also common in the Lower Midwest. See, for instance, Powderly's November 1892 speeches at St. Louis and Belleville. "Unity Urged," *Freeport Daily Bulletin*, November 17, 1892.
68. Weir, *Labor's Veil*, 251.
69. "Washington, Ind.," *Evansville Journal*, December 6, 1882; "Daviess County News," *Evansville Journal*, May 25, 1883.
70. James W. Loewen, "History and Social Justice: Inspired by James W. Loewen," https://justice.tougaloo.edu/location/indiana/.

71. Thornbrough, *Negro*, 226–27.
72. Susan Olzak, *The Dynamics of Ethnic Competition and Conflict* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 107. If this thesis held true at the macro level and on an extended timeline, labor unions would have been strongest in the South, where anti-Black violence was most common. However, the opposite is closer to the truth.
73. *John Swinton's Paper*, July 4, 1886.
74. "The Interests of Labor," *Belleville Semi-Weekly Advocate*, March 12, 1886.
75. Philip S. Foner and Ronald L. Lewis, *The Black Worker during the Era of the Knights of Labor* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978), 283. On the *Conservator* story, see "The Negro Deportation Story," *Journal of the Knights of Labor*, May, 24, 1894.
76. John R. Lynch, "The Color Line in the Ranks of Labor," in Foner, *Black Worker in the Era of the Knights of Labor*, 40–41.
77. Gerteis, *Class*, 8.
78. "Assemblies of Colored Men," *Journal of United Labor* 1 (August 13, 1880): 49.
79. Ward, "Specter," 243–44.
80. Blacks also organized throughout the Wabash River Valley, in Terre Haute, Brazil, and Cementville. See *John Swinton's Paper*, January 9, 1887; Sidney H. Kessler, "The Organization of Negroes in the Knights of Labor," *Journal of Negro History* 37 (July 1952): 259; and Thornbrough, *Negro*, 352. Evansville's Black local assembly was led by District Master Workman Balser of Oakland City. *Evansville Journal*, July 25, 1888. On Murphysboro, see Weir, *Labor's Veil*, 109.
81. "Knights of Labor—The Color Line in Distress," *Evansville Journal*, October 6, 1886.
82. *Evansville Courier*, February 15, 1886.
83. "Working Men in Line," *Evansville Courier*, May 2, 1886.
84. "Knights of Labor," *Evansville Courier*, May 10, 1886.
85. The parade was co-sponsored by Springfield's ten K of L assemblies of tailors, iron workers, cigarmakers, and mixed workers. See "An Immense Affair," *Springfield Daily Republic*, June 13, 1887; "Workingmen's Picnic," *Springfield News-Sun*, June 17, 1887; Weir, *Labor's Veil*, 306.
86. A. C. Barton, *Life of Colonel Jesse Harper* (Chicago: M. A. Donohue, 1904), 10.
87. "Knights of Labor," *Evansville Journal*, August 3, 1886. Perhaps to offset any indication of Black militancy, or to reinforce the biracial theme without fundamentally disrupting familiar racial hierarchies, the ceremony also featured a tokenist float carrying a Black man described as "Uncle Tom" who was honored as one of the community's "pioneers."
88. W. A. Peffer, *The Farmer's Side: His Troubles and Their Remedy* (New York: D. Appleton, 1891), 160.
89. "They're Here," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, May 20, 1891.
90. "People's Party," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, May 21, 1891.
91. See, for example, Leonidas L. Polk, *The Protest of the Farmer* (Washington, D.C.: n.p., 1891).
92. "The Third Party," *Decatur Herald and Review*, May 21, 1891.
93. Matthew E. Stanley, *Grand Army of Labor: Workers, Veterans, and the Meaning of the Civil War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2021).
94. Matthew Hild, *Greenbackers, Knights of Labor, and Populists: Farmer-Labor Insurgency in the Late Nineteenth-Century South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007), 195.

95. Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 99, 186. On the role of two-party competition in the Lower Midwest, see Michael Pierce, *Striking with the Ballot: Ohio Labor and the Populist Party* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010).
96. C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), 82. More African Americans were lynched in 1892 than any other as the march of Populism in the hill countries of North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Texas was snuffed out by corruption, fraud, and the threat of bullets and lynching rope. That year likewise saw a notable rise in the United Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy, as well as the establishment of *Confederate Veteran* magazine. See Ralph Ginzburg, *100 Years of Lynching* (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1962), 244; and W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 128, 140.
97. Manfred Berg, *Popular Justice: A History of Lynching in America* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2011), 95; Stewart E. Tolnay and E.M. Beck, *A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of Southern Lynchings, 1882–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 195–99. For a case study of this phenomenon in Georgia, see Sarah A. Soule, "Populism and Black Lynching in Georgia, 1890–1900," *Social Forces* 71 (December 1992): 431–49. Soule posits that "rates of racial violence rose when racial competition increased," whether through Black migration, integration into traditionally white industries, or greater political leverage within interracial coalitions (the Populists).

Part IV: The Buffer Problem

1. "Cairo, Ill., Excited Over Murder of Girl," *South Bend Tribune*, November 10, 1909.
2. "After Six Days of Terror," *Cairo Bulletin*, November 15, 1909.
3. "Avenging Mob," *Cairo Bulletin*, November 12, 1909.
4. For the fullest account of these events, see John A. Beadles, *Stained with Blood and Tears: Lynchings, Murder, and Mob Violence in Cairo, Illinois, 1909–1910* (Carbondale, IL: Saluki Publishing, 2019).
5. *Cairo Bulletin*, November 13, 1909.
6. On the "stone wall of silence" in Cairo, see "Echoes of Lynching Bee," *Rushville Republican*, December 6, 1909. On public support for the lynchings in Cairo, see "People Express Opinions," *Cairo Bulletin*, November 15, 1909. The *Cairo Bulletin* repeatedly blamed elected Republicans and maintained that residents did not trust an allegedly corrupt law enforcement system to swiftly or properly administer justice.
7. "Coroner's Inquiry," *Cairo Bulletin*, November 10, 1909.
8. "Mobs and Crime Denounced," *Cairo Bulletin*, November 15, 1909.
9. Beadles, *Stained*, 65.
10. "Cairo's Deep Disgrace," *Cairo Bulletin*, November 12, 1909.
11. "Illinois Mobs Lynch Two Men," *Salem Herald-Advocate*, November 19, 1909.
12. "There's many a girl in Cairo Town / Wicked, wicked Cairo Town / Some are white, and some are brown / In wicked, wicked, Cairo Town." See "Justice Thunders Condemnation," author unknown, Box 1, Folder 24, Slavery and Race Relations in

Illinois, 1764–1902, John I. Wright Collection (JIWC), Morris Library, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois.

13. "Preface" and "Justice Thunders Condemnation," Box 1, Folder 24, Slavery and Race Relations in Illinois, 1764–1902, JIWC.
14. "Dead Girl an Orphan," *Cairo Bulletin*, November 10, 1909; "Noble Tribute to the Dead," *Cairo Bulletin*, November 12, 1909.
15. "Memory of Miss Pelley," *Cairo Bulletin*, October 17, 1910. See also the description of the *Belleville News–Democrat* in Beadles, *Stained*, 65.
16. Christopher K. Hays, "The African American Struggle for Equality and Justice in Cairo, 1865–1900," *Illinois Historical Journal* 90 (Winter 1997): 265–84.
17. On city leaders' recognition of this point, see "Cairo's Future Greatness," *Cairo Bulletin*, November 6, 1909; on cargo decline, see Beadles, *Stained*, 4.
18. Kerry Pimblott, *Faith in Black Power: Religion, Race, and Resistance in Cairo, Illinois* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2016), 11–12.
19. Pimblott argues that Cairo's Black working class remained "extraordinarily marginalized" into the twentieth century owing to a lack of Black institutions vis-à-vis larger border cities. Cairo's absence of a large industrial base also precluded various forms of worker power and organization, as Black wage earners remained overwhelmingly day laborers and seasonal and service workers. This resulted in both lower living standards for Black workers and the underdevelopment of a Black middle class. Darrel Bigham describes similar patterns in Evansville. Pimblott, *Black Power*, 19.
20. *Memphis Commercial Appeal,* reprinted in *Cairo Bulletin*, September 7, 1904.
21. *Cairo Bulletin*, April 19, 1876. On drug use among Black levee workers, see "America's Curse," *Cairo Bulletin*, July 23, 1909.
22. "Another Strike," *Cairo Bulletin*, August 3, 1877.
23. "Rousters Again," *Cairo Bulletin*, October 14, 1904.
24. *Cairo Bulletin*, September 7, 1904.
25. Harry F. Kohr, "Not a Rouster Aboard," *Technical World Magazine* (March 1913): 887.
26. *Cairo Bulletin*, January 28, 1876.
27. "Rousters Are Indolent," *Cairo Bulletin*, March 6, 1904; *Memphis Commercial Appeal,* reprinted in *Cairo Bulletin*, September 7, 1904.
28. *Cairo Bulletin*, September 7, 1904.
29. "The Roustabout Problem," *Cairo Bulletin*, September 5, 1904.
30. "Boats Delayed," *Cairo Bulletin*, August 15, 1909.
31. *New York Times*, November 19, 1909.
32. "People Express Opinions," *Cairo Bulletin*, November 15, 1909.
33. *Chicago Tribune*, November 13, 1909.
34. "Mobs and Crime Denounced," *Cairo Bulletin*, November 15, 1909.
35. *New York Times*, November 19, 1909.

Chapter 7: *Colluvies Vitiorum*

1. Scerial Thompson, "A Century Ago in Saline County," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 40 (June 1947): 200–208.
2. On how this process occurred in Kentucky, see Stephen Aron, *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

3. Christopher Phillips, *The Rivers Ran Backward: The Civil War and the Remaking of the American Middle Border* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 15–20.
4. On anti-landholder "regulators," see David Grimsted, "Né D'Hier: American Vigilantism, American Rebirth and Political Traditions," in *People and Power: Rights, Citizenship and Violence*, ed. Loretta Valtz Mannucci (Milan, IT: Grafiche Vadacca, 1992), 89–90; on the Flathead-Regulator War, see "The War in Massac," *Illinois State Journal*, August 24, 1849; James A. Rose, "The Regulators and Flatheads in Southern Illinois," in *Papers in Illinois History*, ed. Illinois State Historical Society (Springfield: Illinois State Journal, 1906), 108–21; "The Rose Manuscript: The War Between the Flatheads and the Regulators, Massac and Adjoining Counties, 1846–1851," n.d., Morris Library, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois; and Alice L. Brumbaugh, "The Regulator Movement in Illinois" (MA thesis, University of Illinois, 1927).
5. Jon Musgrave, ed., *The Bloody Vendetta of Southern Illinois* (Marion, IL: IllinoisHistory.com, 2006), 17.
6. Richard Maxwell Brown, *Strain of Violence: Historical Studies of American Violence and Vigilantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 98–111.
7. Brown, *Violence*, 99.
8. Ibid., 309.
9. Musgrave, *Vendetta*, 70–71.
10. The *New York Tribune* estimated that there were roughly 1,000 Klansmen in Franklin and Williamson counties. "Illinois Ku Klux," September 1, 1875.
11. "Illinois Ku Klux," *New York Herald*, August 28, 1872. For examples of typical Klan encounters, see "KKK," *Chicago Tribune*, August 19, 1875.
12. Edgard F. Raines, "The Ku Klux Klan in Illinois, 1867–1875," *Illinois Historical Journal* 78 (Spring 1985): 44. See also Edgar F. Raines, "The Ku Klux Klan in Illinois, 1867–1875," unpublished manuscript, Indiana Historical Society (HIS), Indianapolis, Indiana.
13. Ibid., 27–44. The *National Republican* maintained that Illinois Klansmen were jealous of the southern Klan for getting to murder Black people without consequence, August 21, 1875.
14. *Chicago Tribune*, August 14, 1875.
15. *Cairo Bulletin* reprinted in *Rock Island Daily Argus*, September 17, 1874.
16. Musgrave, *Vendetta*, 69.
17. *Cairo Bulletin* reprinted in *Chicago Tribune* as "Outrages in Southern Illinois," October 10, 1874.
18. "Illinois Outlawry," *St. Louis Republican*, August 23, 1875. Although Dacus cited Williamson, Jackson, Saline, Gallatin, and Johnson as principal Klan counties in the region, his circular focused on the town of Benton, in Franklin County, which he described as a small but industrious community.
19. Raines, "Ku Klux Klan," 24–26, 41.
20. "Illinois Outlawry," *St. Louis Republican*, August 23, 1875.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Patrick Wyman, "American Gentry," *The Atlantic*, September 23, 2021, https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/09/trump–american–gentry–wyman–elites/620151/.

24. Chad E. Pearson, *Capital's Terrorists: Klansmen, Lawmen, and Employers in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2022). See also Elaine Frantz Parsons, *Ku Klux: The Birth of the Klan during Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015).
25. Raines, "Ku Klux Klan," 18.
26. Ibid., 20.
27. "Illinois Ku Klux," *New York Herald*, August 28, 1872; Raines, "Ku Klux Klan," 44. Exploiting white grievance, Democrats accused the Grant administration—which had aggressively quashed the movement in the South, where Klan victims were almost exclusively Black, and not in southern Illinois, where victims were white—of turning a blind eye toward "loyal marauders" and favoring Black victims over white ones. See, "Unjust Discrimination by the Federal Government," *New York Herald*, August 24, 1875; and "Make Way for the Loyal Marauders," *Memphis Public Ledger*, July 7, 1871.
28. "Illinois Ku Klux," *New York Herald*, August 28, 1872.
29. "Western Lynch Law," *Ottawa Free Trader*, September 8, 1888. See also Madeleine M. Noble, "The White Caps of Harrison and Crawford Counties, Indiana: A Study in Violent Enforcement of Morality" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1973). Noble argues that southern Indiana's landscape shaped the intensely local nature of its extralegal violence.
30. Henry Clay Duncan, "White Caps in Southern Indiana," speech read before the Monroe County Historical Society, n.d., Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana.
31. Bryan D. Palmer, *Marxism and Historical Practice: Interpretive Essays on Class Formation and Class Struggle* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2015), 14–15.
32. Brian Butler, *An Undergrowth of Folly: Public Order, Race Anxiety, and the 1903 Evansville, Indiana Riot* (New York: Garland, 2000), 165.
33. Clifton J. Phillips, *Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880–1920* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1968), 372–73.
34. For a contemporary illustration of a "White Cap in Uniform," see *Ottawa Free Trader*, September 8, 1888.
35. *Indianapolis Journal*, January 4, 1889.
36. Phillips, *Indiana*, 373–74.
37. On racial exclusion in Harrison County, see Jack Temple Kirby, *Rural Worlds Lost: The American South, 1920–1960* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 235n7.
38. Phillips, *Indiana*, 374.
39. "Western Lynch Law," *Ottawa Free Trader*, September 8, 1888.
40. Duncan, "White Caps," 5–6, 11, 19.
41. Ted Robert Gurr, *Violence in America: Protest, Rebellion, Reform* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1989), 39. Booth Tarkington's popular turn of the century novel, *The Gentleman from Indiana*, adapted as a film in 1915, referenced White Cap violence. Tarkington, *The Gentleman from Indiana* (New York: Doubleday and McClure, 1900), 175.
42. Noble, "White Caps," 177–90.
43. Phillips, *Indiana*, 373.
44. Robert Wald Sussman, *The Myth of Race: The Troubling Persistence of an Unscientific Idea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 61.

45. Madison Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race: The Racial Basis of European History* (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1916), 36.
46. John Hartigan Jr., *Odd Tribes: Toward a Cultural Analysis of White People* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 73.
47. George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1971), 230.
48. Matt Wray and Annalee Newitz, eds., *White Trash: Race and Class in America* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 1–8.
49. Sherwood Anderson, *Poor White* (New York: B.W. Huebsch, 1920), 18–19; Hartigan, *Odd Tribes*, 72–75.
50. *Chicago Tribune*, March 19, 1879.
51. *Belleville Advocate*, reprinted in *Brownlow's Knoxville Whig*, February 7, 1866.
52. *Daily Clarion*, January 20, 1886.
53. *Chicago Eagle*, January 7, 1893.
54. "Free and Slave Labor," *Freedmen's Record* 1 (March 1865): 45.
55. Maurice Williams, *Seven Years' History of the Cotton Trade of Europe* (Liverpool, UK: William Potter, 1868), 76.
56. *New York Sun,* reprinted in *Millheim Journal*, January 17, 1878.
57. Richard Lyle Power, *Planting Corn Belt Culture: The Impress of Upland Southerner and Yankee in the Old Northwest* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1953), 85; disproportionately native-born, half of White's subjects arrived in Evansville between 1836 and 1849, and 40 percent were born in New England or the Middle Atlantic states. Darrel E. Bigham, *Towns and Villages of the Lower Ohio* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 72.
58. Robert Wilson Patterson, *Early Society in Southern Illinois, A Lecture, Read before the Chicago Historical Society, October 19, 1880* (Chicago: Fergus Printing, 1881), 5–8. Writing in 1904, Englishman Curtis M. Geer also claimed that in addition to a lack of property and employment opportunities Tennesseans and Kentuckians migrated to southern Illinois to escape the humiliation of being called "poor white trash." See *The History of North America,* vol. 8: *The Louisiana Purchase and the Westward Movement* (London: George Barrie & Sons, 1904), 268.
59. "Southern Indiana and the Democratic State Ticket," *Indianapolis Journal*, October 25, 1884. On "white trash districts of Southern Indiana," see *Goodwin's Weekly*, May 25, 1907.
60. Daniel R. Mandell, *The Lost Tradition of Economic Equality in America, 1600–1870* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020).
61. *Stark County Democrat*, September 9, 1897.
62. "We in gittin mo like de white trash ebery day," *Indianapolis Leader*, February 4, 1882; "A Straightforward Republican [in Indiana]," *State Rights Democrat*, April 2, 1880.
63. "Egypt vs. Arkansas," *Iconoclast*, reprinted in *Pine Bluff Daily Graphic*, October 4, 1896.
64. Norman Dwight Harris, *The History of Negro Servitude in Illinois* (Chicago, IL: A. C. McClurg and Co., 1904), 17.
65. *Indianapolis Journal*, February 10, 1894.
66. Matt Wray, *Not Quite White: White Trash and the Boundaries of Whiteness* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 132.

67. Logan Esarey, *A History of Indiana* (Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen, 1918), 1115.
68. Esarey, *Indiana*, 1116–17.
69. John Merritte Driver, *Americans All: A Romance of the Great War* (Chicago: Forbes & Co., 1911), 25–28. For Driver's biography, see C.W.G. Hyde and William Stoddard, *History of the Great Northwest and its Men of Progress* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Journal, 1901), 479–81.
70. Robin Blackburn, *An Unfinished Revolution: Karl Marx and Abraham Lincoln* (London: Verso, 2011), 18.
71. Dale M. Bauer, *Nineteenth-Century Women's Serial Novels* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 77.
72. *Cairo Bulletin*, June 3, 1905.

Chapter 8: The Discipline of Terror

1. State of Indiana, *Annual Reports of the Officers of the State of Indiana,* vol. 1 (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Buford, 1901), 18; "Crusade Begun in Many Ohio River Towns," *Sandusky Star-Journal*, January 29, 1901.
2. "Whites Attempt to Burn Negro Out at Newburg," *Evansville Courier*, January 10, 1901; "Negro Crusade in Indiana," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 30, 1901.
3. "Excitement Has Ended at Newburg," *Evansville Courier*, January 12, 1901.
4. "Negro Refuses to be Banished," *Buffalo News*, January 11, 1901.
5. "A Race War is Imminent," *Fort Wayne Sentinel*, January 10, 1901; "As Seen By the South," *Evansville Courier*, January 14, 1901.
6. For this or other reasons, Newburgh's Black population fell from 282 in 1900 to 143 in 1910. United States Census Office, 1900 and 1910 U.S. Federal Census, Warrick County, Indiana, database with images, http://www.ancestry.com.
7. Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital, 1848–1875* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975), 193–207; "Obnoxious Negroes Dumped Into City," *Evansville Courier*, January 16, 1901.
8. Brian Butler, *An Undergrowth of Folly: Public Order, Race Anxiety, and the 1903 Evansville, Indiana Riot* (New York: Garland, 2000), 169–71.
9. "Anti–Negro Crusade," *Chattanooga Times*, January 29, 1901.
10. Clifton J. Phillips, *Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880–1920* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1968), 376.
11. James W. Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York: New Press, 2005), 53–58.
12. Andrew R. L. Cayton and Susan E. Gray, eds., *The American Midwest: Essays on Regional History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 16.
13. Michael J. Pfiefer, *Lynching Beyond Dixie: American Mob Violence Outside the South* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 8.
14. As Emma Lou Thornbrough recognized, "Conditions varied in different parts of the state. . . . While a Negro might expect service in a town in a north county, he would not think of venturing into a 'white' restaurant in one of the Ohio River towns." Emma Lou Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana Before 1900: A Study of a Minority* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Press, 1957), 265.
15. Guy Lancaster, *American Atrocity: The Types of Violence in Lynching* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2021), 5.
16. This argument dates at least to the writings of Ida B. Wells, who argued that racial

violence was amenable to the white professional class because it was both a means of absorbing or liquidating Black wealth and a way to retain a captive Black labor force. See, for example, *Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 55.

17. On lynching as *group* rather than *collective* or *individual* violence, see Lancaster, *Atrocity*, 13–42.
18. George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1971), 256.
19. Lancaster, *Atrocity*, 95.
20. Amy Louise Wood, *Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890–1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 5–6.
21. David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White* (New York: Basic Books, 2005).
22. Darrel E. Bigham, *Towns and Villages of the Lower Ohio* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 134, 177; Michael J. Pfiefer, *Rough Justice: Lynching and American Society, 1874–1947* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 50. Pfeifer argues that upland southern and northeastern notions of criminal justice were pitted against one another in the nineteenth-century borderland. But even as "Yankee" reformist and legalistic traditions gradually replaced older patterns of community retribution, racial aversion remained deeply entrenched. Pfeifer, *Rough Justice*, 129.
23. Roberta Senechal de la Roche concludes that white people of lower socioeconomic status were more vulnerable to arrest and indictment in *Sociogenesis of a Race Riot: Springfield, Illinois, in 1908* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 97–103.
24. Brent M. S. Campney, *Hostile Heartland: Racism, Repression, and Resistance in the Midwest* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2019), 7.
25. James W. Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York: The New Press, 2005), 63.
26. Ibid., 86. On South America, see P. T. Chapman, *A History of Johnson County, Illinois* (Herrin, IL: Herrin News, 1925), 156.
27. Lancaster, *Atrocity*, 60.
28. Ira Berlin, *The Making of African America: Four Great Migrations* (New York: Penguin, 2010), 156. The fact that 96 percent of Black Northerners resided in cities provides some idea of the racial homogeneity of large swaths of the rural Midwest.
29. Jack S. Blocker Jr., "Race, Sex, and Riot: The Springfield, Ohio Race Riots of 1904 and 1906 and the Sources of Anti-Black Violence in the Lower Midwest," *Ohio Valley History* 6 (Spring 2006): 29. Thornbrough estimates that at least twenty confirmed lynchings (and more unconfirmed) occurred in Indiana between 1865 and 1903. *Negro*, 276.
30. Lisa G. Materson, *For the Freedom of Her Race: Black Women and Electoral Politics in Illinois, 1877–1932* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 9.
31. Thornbrough, *Negro*, 230.
32. Terry Boswell, Cliff Brown et al., *Racial Competition and Class Solidarity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 56.
33. "Race War in Illinois," *Alexandria Gazette*, October 12, 1897.
34. "Race War in Illinois," *Pittsburgh Dispatch*, September 16, 1889.
35. "Race War in Indiana," *Evening Star*, August 25, 1905.

36. "Race War in Indiana," *Wisconsin Tobacco Reporter*, January 18, 1901.
37. "Situation in Race War in Illinois," *Akron Daily Democrat*, September 24, 1902; "Race on in Illinois," *New Age* (Butte, MT), June 20, 1902.
38. *San Francisco Chronicle*, reprinted in *Indianapolis Journal*, February 12, 1889.
39. *Indianapolis Journal*, February 6, 1889.
40. "Race Riots at Huron," *Indianapolis Journal*, September 12, 1900.
41. Thornbrough, *Negro*, 207.
42. "Anti-Negro Clubs Formed," *Broad Ax*, September 25, 1909.
43. Joe William Trotter Jr., *River Jordan: African American Urban Life in the Ohio Valley* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 106.
44. Ibid., 104.
45. "The History of Attucks School," Box 1, Folder 24, Slavery and Race Relations in Illinois, 1764–1902, John I. Wright Collection, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois.
46. "Race War at Alton, Illinois," *Louisville Courier–Journal*, January 17, 1890. On repeated arson crimes against Black schools, see, for instance, "East St. Louis," *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, November 29 and 30, 1906.
47. Thornbrough, *Negro*, 324–25. Indiana's 1869 law was amended in 1877 to state that, in cases where separate schools were not provided, Black children should attend white schools.
48. *Minneapolis Journal*, January 28, 1905.
49. *McArthur Democrat*, March 13, 1862.
50. *Ohio Democrat*, October 29, 1887.
51. *Morning Journal and Courier*, September 26, 1887.
52. *New York Post*, reprinted in *Barton County Democrat*, April 25, 1889.
53. *Brooklyn Eagle*, reprinted in *Fairfield News and Herald*, August 25, 1886.
54. *New York Post*, reprinted in *Barton County Democrat*, April 25, 1889.
55. Roger Biles, *Illinois: A History of the Land and Its People* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2005), 142–43.
56. In Cincinnati in September 1867, for example, white boatmen attacked Black laborers with clubs, pick-axes, and pike poles, mortally wounding several. *Evening Star*, September 9, 1867.
57. Elliott M. Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964), 8.
58. Campney, *Hostile Heartland*, 59.
59. *Chicago Tribune*, April 6, 1880.
60. "The Exodus," *Indiana State Sentinel*, January 28, 1880.
61. "The Bourbon Negrophobia," *Chicago Tribune*, January 14, 1880.
62. *Indiana State Sentinel*, October 29, 1879.
63. "The Heathen Chinee," *Chicago Tribune*, December 31, 1878.
64. "Another Phase of the Chinese Question," *Chicago Tribune*, March 19, 1879.
65. "The Heathen Chinee," *Chicago Tribune*, December 31, 1878.
66. *Cairo Bulletin*, September 21, 1875.
67. "'Nigger' Haters," *Chicago Tribune*, January 23, 1880; "The Indiana Ku Klux," *Chicago Tribune*, January 24, 1880.
68. Leah Platt Bouston, *Competition in the Promised Land: Black Migrants in Northern Cities and Labor Markets* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 1–13.

69. Thornbrough, *Negro*, 349–51, 357.
70. Ibid., 351.
71. Loewen, *Sundown Towns*, 157–59.
72. "Firebug's Warning," *Indianapolis Journal*, February 17, 1902.
73. "Laborers Draw the Color Line," *Cairo Bulletin*, June 2, 1907; "Negroes Run Out of Hillsboro," *Cairo Bulletin*, August 10, 1907; *Butler Weekly Times*, August 15, 1907.
74. *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, September 13, 1884.
75. *Bamberg Herald*, February 20, 1902; *Montgomery Tribune*, December 4, 1908.
76. *Farmington Times*, August 22, 1912.
77. Nelson W. Evans and Emmons B. Stivers, *A History of Adams County, Ohio* (West Union, OH: E. B. Stivers, 1900), 393–94, 444.
78. At Shawneetown, a masked posse of perhaps fifty men stormed the jail in an attempt to lynch John Griffin, a Black man accused of assaulting a white woman. Only a stealthy prisoner transfer to the nearby town of Carmi saved Griffin's life. "Attempt at Lynching," *Indianapolis Journal*, September 2, 1903; *Colored American*, November 14, 1903, and June 20, 1903.
79. Butler, *Undergrowth*, 11.
80. Darrel E. Bigham, "Work, Residence, and the Emergence of the Black Ghetto in Evansville, Indiana, 1865–1900," *Indiana Magazine of History* 76 (December 1980): 287–318.
81. Frank M. Gilbert, *History of the City of Evansville and Vanderburgh County, Indiana* (Reprint, Evansville, IN: Tri-State Genealogical Society, 1988), 179.
82. Butler, *Undergrowth*, xiv, 10, 194.
83. On the demographics of Evansville's 1903 rioters, see Butler, *Undergrowth*, 219–22. Butler concludes that a plurality of the rioters lived in Wards 5 and 6, which did not border the Black community of Baptisttown.
84. "Serious Race War in an Indiana City," *Minneapolis Journal*, July 6, 1903.
85. "Evansville Mob Quieted Down," *Daily Silver State*, July 8, 1903.
86. Phillips, *Indiana*, 377; Butler, *Undergrowth*, 222–23, 232.
87. Campney, *Hostile Heartland*, 1.
88. "Durbin on Mob Law," *Indianapolis Journal*, July 9, 1903.
89. Butler, *Undergrowth*, 226–27. Debs blamed the riot on the alleged Republican practice of "importing" impoverished Blacks from Kentucky who were willing to "sell" their votes to the party. In doing so he echoed racist Democratic talking points that painted Black voters as Republican pawns. "Debs on Political Conditions," *Rock Island Argus*, July 21, 1903.
90. Butler, *Undergrowth*, 228.
91. "Lynching at the North," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 9, 1903.
92. "Seven Funerals Held," *Indianapolis Journal*, July 10, 1903.
93. "It Wants to Know," *Plymouth Tribune*, July 23, 1903; "Unable to Get Rousters," *Indianapolis Journal*, July 29, 1903.
94. Jack S. Blocker, Jr., "Race, Sex, and Riot: The Springfield, Ohio Race Riots of 1904 and 1906 and the Sources of Anti-Black Violence in the Lower Midwest," *Ohio Valley History* 6 (Spring 2006): 27–44. On racial "interzones," see Kevin J. Mumford, *Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New York in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).
95. *Los Angeles Herald*, April 27, 1903; Pfeifer, *Lynching*, 302; Jack S. Blocker, *A Little*

More Freedom: African Americans Enter the Urban Midwest, 1860–1930 (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2008), 226.
96. *Wilmington Messenger*, September 14, 1900.
97. De la Roche, *Race Riot*, 27, 84.
98. William English Walling, "The Race War in the North," *The Independent* 3 (September 1903): 530.
99. Ibid., 532.
100. Stephen H. Norwood, *Strikebreaking and Intimidation: Mercenaries and Masculinity in Twentieth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 82.
101. *Thibodaux Sentinel*, August 22, 1908.
102. Walling, "Race War," 529. James Loewen restates the quote as "Abe Lincoln brought them to Springfield, and we will drive them out!," *Sundown Towns*, 94.
103. Walling, "Race War," 530, 534.
104. Herbert Shapiro, *White Violence and Black Response: From Reconstruction to Montgomery* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 103–4.
105. *Progressive Farmer*, June 30, 1903; *Gold Leaf*, June 8, 1893.
106. *Clinch Valley News*, August 21, 1908; *Staunton Spectator and Vindicator*, August 21, 1908.
107. "The North Star's Light," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, August 19, 1908.
108. "The North Is Learning," *Farmer and the Mechanic*, May 5, 1903; *Progressive Farmer*, July 11, 1893.
109. On film premieres and segregation, see Trotter, *River Jordan*, 104.
110. *Cairo Bulletin*, April 16, 1906.
111. Thornbrough, *Negro*, 347.
112. Robin D.G. Kelley, "The Tulsa Race Riot Went Way Beyond 'Black Wall Street,'" *Truthout*, June 1, 2021, https://truthout.org/articles/robin–kelley–business–interests–fomented–tulsa–massacre–as–pretext–to–take–land/.
113. Elliott M. Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964), 7–26.
114. "Organized Labor Not Responsible for Race Riots," *United Mine Workers Journal*, July 12, 1917.
115. "The East St. Louis Riots," *United Mine Workers Journal*, July 19, 1917. Walker rightly claimed that capitalists had engaged "subterfuge, fraud, and deception" by employing labor agents to lie to Black workers about the nature of hours, wages, and local labor conditions. This was all part of a common and intentionally vague "propaganda" campaign, Walker insisted, in which agents refused to list specific companies that were supposedly short of labor and simply abandoned unneeded workers, all in an effort to undermine unionization.
116. "The Cause and Remedy for Race Riots," *The Messenger* (September 1919): 14–17.
117. "Illinois Race Riots Blamed on Employers," *United Mine Workers Journal*, November 8, 1917.
118. Rudwick, *Race Riot*, 145.
119. "The Massacre of East St. Louis," *The Crisis* 14 (September 1917): 219–38.
120. Du Bois's position on interracial labor organizing was fluid and contradictory. See Cody R. Melcher, "First as Tragedy, Then as Farce: W. E. B. Du Bois, Left-Wing Radicalism, and the Problem of Interracial Labor Organization," *Critical Sociology* 46 (December 2019): 1041–55.

Part V: The Vanguard

1. "Debs Pleads for Overthrown of the Competitive System," *Evansville Courier*, April 24, 1899.
2. "Debs Discusses Socialism," *Evansville Journal*, April 10, 1900.
3. "Debs Discusses Socialism," *Evansville Journal*, April 10, 1900; "Says Brighter Day Is Sure to Come," *Evansville Courier*, April 10, 1900.
4. "The National Labor Day," *Evansville Courier*, September 8, 1896.
5. Ileen A. DeVault, *United Apart: Gender and the Rise of Craft Unionism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 145.
6. "Eugene V. Debs," *Evansville Journal*, November 5, 1900.
7. "Debs Discusses Socialism," *Evansville Journal*, April 10, 1900. Some of these phrases derive from the editor's summary of Debs's speech.
8. Chris Evans, *History of the United Mine Workers of America,* vol. 2 (Indianapolis: United Mine Workers, 1919), 192–94; Samuel W. White, *Fragile Alliances: Labor and Politics in Evansville, Indiana, 1919–1955* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2005), 11.
9. Clifton J. Phillips, *Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880–1920* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1968), 345–46.
10. Frank M. Gilbert, *History of the City of Evansville and Vanderburgh County, Indiana* (Reprint, Evansville, IN: Tri-State Genealogical Society, 1988), 416–19.
11. On UMW efforts to tame the market by centralizing and cooperating with capitalists to achieve a regulated and industry-wide scale of prices, see Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 205–14.
12. Alex Gourevitch, *From Slavery to the Cooperative Commonwealth: Labor and Republican Liberty in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 4, 67–70.
13. Lorenzo Costaguta, *Workers of All Colors Unite: Race and the Origins of American Socialism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2023), 5.
14. C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution,* 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage, 1963).
15. Terry Boswell, Cliff Brown, et. al., *Racial Competition and Class Solidarity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 103–6. Boswell argues that there was a reciprocal relationship between racial division and working-class disunity in industrially developing societies, as places that lacked interracial institutions tended to produce a politically weaker working class. Such locales saw more pervasive and effective use of minority strikebreaking, as well as a greater potential for anti–Black working-class violence, which consequently bolstered the salience of race as it related to labor. Alonzo Ward also contends that Black workers within historically segregated societies were more likely to be perceived by whites as the "natural enemy" of white workers. "Specter," 194.
16. On "transactional" identity, see T. H. Breen and Stephen Innes, "*Myne Owne Ground*": *Race and Freedom on Virginia's Eastern Shore, 1640–1676* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), xv.
17. Debs's own American Railway Union had upheld a whites-only policy, against the wishes of its leader. "Draws a Race Line: Question of Color before the American Railway Union," *Chicago Tribune*, June 19, 1894.
18. David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991), 65–92.

19. Ibid., 68, 71.
20. United States Industrial Commission, *Reports of the Industrial Commission on Labor Organizations, Labor Disputes, and Arbitration* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901), 185.

9. Constructing a Specter

1. W. T. Norton, *Centennial History of Madison County, Illinois, and Its People, 1812–1912* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing, 1912), 207; P. T. Chapman, *A History of Johnson County, Illinois* (Herrin, IL: Herrin News, 1925), 155.
2. W. T. Norton, *Centennial History of Madison County, Illinois, and Its People, 1812–1912* (Chicago, IL: Lewis Publishing, 1912), 199.
3. Stu Fliege, *Tales and Trails of Illinois* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 36–39; For an early use of "Illinois coal field," see Richard Lyle Power, *Planting Corn Belt Culture: The Impress of Upland Southerner and Yankee in the Old Northwest* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1953), 164.
4. "Miners of Ohio," *Fincher's Trades' Review*, July 15, 1865.
5. John McBride, "The Coal Miners," in George E. McNeill, et. al., *The Labor Movement: The Problem of Today* (New York: M. W. Hazen, 1888), 241.
6. David Brody, *In Labor's Cause: Main Themes on the History of the American Worker* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 138.
7. "The Post–Civil War Coal Industry in Illinois," August 1, 1976, n.p., Box 20, Folder 52, Southern Illinois Collection, Morris Library (ML), Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois.
8. Herbert G. Gutman, "An Iron Workers' Strike in the Ohio Valley, 1873–1874," *Ohio Historical Quarterly* 68 (1959): 353–70; Cicero B. Fain, "Race, River, and the Railroad: Black Huntington, West Virginia, 1871–1929" (PhD dissertation, Ohio State University, 2009), 172. Racial homogeneity did not preclude class conflict or border consciousness, as evidenced by the 1907 furniture makers' strike in Tell City, Indiana.
9. Rudi Batzell, *Organizing Workers in the Shadow of Slavery: Global Inequality, Racial Boundaries, and the Rise of Unions in American and British Capitalism, 1870–1929* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2025), 1; "Let Us Have a Miners' National Union," *Workingman's Advocate*, April 19, 1873; W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1935), 352, 357–58.
10. Herbert G. Gutman, "Reconstruction in Ohio: Negroes in the Hocking Valley Coal Mines in 1873 and 1874," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 3 (Fall 1962): 243–64.
11. Sterling D. Spero and Abram L. Harris, *The Black Worker: The Negro and the Labor Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), 210.
12. Frans H. Doppen, *Richard L. Davis and the Color Line in Ohio Coal: A Hocking Valley Mine Labor Organizer, 1862–1900* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2016), 21.
13. "Hocking Valley Outrage," *Workingman's Advocate*, June 20, 1874.
14. "White vs. Colored Labor," *Workingman's Advocate*, March 6, 1875. The *Advocate* remained committed to a position of interracial white supremacy, concluding that the "superior intellect of the Caucasian" might cultivate union loyalty in Black workers through education and association.
15. Ivan M. Tribe, "The Hocking Valley Coal Strike of 1884," 6–10, unpublished manu-

script, Ohio Historical Society (OHS), Columbus, Ohio; A.D. Fassett, *Speech of Hon. A. D. Fassett, Delivered at Church Hill, O., September 17, 1885*, 2, OHS. The former editor of Youngstown's daily labor newspaper, *Miner and Manufacturer*, Fassett was appointed state labor commissioner in 1877. See Thomas W. Sanderson, *20th-Century History of Youngstown and Mahoning County, Ohio* (Chicago: Biographical Publishing Company, 1907), 427–28.

16. Although miner Christopher Evans described "continual turmoil between owners and their employees" during hearings by a state investigation committee, the Ohio Coal Company officials maintained that they had no predetermined plans to use imported workers. Worker importation was, in the words of one operator, an "after consideration" in response to worker militancy. See General Assembly of the State of Ohio, *Proceedings of the Hocking Valley Investigation Committee* (Columbus: The Westbote Co., State Printers, 1885), 29–30.
17. Lawrence M. Lipin, *Producers, Proletarians, and Politicians*: *Workers and Party Politics in Evansville and New Albany, Indiana, 1850–1887* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 255.
18. Warren C. Whatley, "African American Strikebreaking from the Civil War to the New Deal," *Social Science History* 17 (Winter 1993): 528.
19. "War of Races," *Nashville Union and American*, February 20, 1874. The strike reportedly came to involve 2,500 miners and their demands of unionization and price uniformity went unrealized. See "A Miners' Strike," *Centre Reporter* (PA), October 15, 1874.
20. "Peril at Grape Creek," *Indianapolis Journal*, July 14, 1886; John H. Keiser, "Black Strikebreakers and Racism in Illinois, 1865–1900," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 65 (Autumn 1972): 318.
21. Esarey, *Indiana*, 1069–70; Lewis, *Black Coal Miners*, 87–88; Brent M. S. Campney, *Hostile Heartland: Racism, Repression, and Resistance in the Midwest* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2019), 61.
22. "The Staunton Strike," *National Labor Tribune*, March 21, 1885.
23. Trotter, *River Jordan*, 101–2.
24. "The Old, Old Story," *United Mine Workers Journal* (*UMWJ*), August 16, 1894.
25. Victor Hicken, "The Virden and Pana Mine Wars of 1898," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 52 (Summer 1959): 269.
26. *Galesburg Labor News*, October 8, 1898; "Imported Negroes in Pana Destitute," *Evansville Courier*, June 30, 1899.
27. *Indiana State Sentinel*, October 8, 1884.
28. *Nashville Union and American*, June 13, 1874.
29. Spero, *Black Worker*, 131–32; Ray Marshall, "Black Workers and the Unions," *Dissent* 19 (Winter 1972): 295; Whatley, "African American Strikebreaking," 555–58. The pro-miner press was far more restrained when the company imported largely white strikebreakers. Ronald L. Lewis, *Black Coal Miners in America: Race, Class, and Community Conflict, 1780–1980* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1987), 86.
30. Eric Arnesen, "Specter of the Black Strikebreaker: Race, Employment, and Labor Activism in the Industrial Era," *Labor History* 44 (2003): 320.
31. Gutman argued that employers' strategic use of Black strikebreakers to "weaken the UMW" was "most severe" in downstate Illinois. "The Negro and the United Mine Workers," in *Work, Culture and Society*, 175.

32. Roediger, *Wages*, 7–9. For examples of segmentation theory, see David M. Gordon, Richard Edwards, and Michael Reich, *Segmented Work, Divided Workers: The Historical Transformation of Labor in the United States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Gutman notes that state interventions in labor disputes occurred most often in communities where workers had shallower social roots and less political influence, and where local officials and law enforcement were aligned more with owners than workers. See "Reconstruction," 27–28; and "Trouble on the Railroads in 1873–1874: Prelude to the 1877 Crisis?," in Daniel J. Leab, ed., *The Labor History Reader* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 256. As Whatley argues, such interventions overwhelmingly benefited owners, and "African American strikebreakers increased the probability that a strike would turn violent, which often meant that a police power would intervene to protect life and property." Whether or not it was a conscious strategy on the part of owners (and Whatley maintains that it often was), the employment of Black strikebreakers, and the insertion of racial animosity *in addition to* union/non-union antagonism, further undermined the potential for working-class solidarity. Whatley, "African American Strikebreaking," 542–43.
33. Edna Bonacich, "Advanced Capitalism and Black/White Relations in the United States: A Split Labor Market Interpretation," *American Sociological Review* 41 (February 1976): 34–51.
34. Boswell, *Racial Competition*, 1–17, 21–23. Conversely, interracialism is more likely when the labor market is less split—including when dominant group workers attempt to integrate rather than exclude or segregate minority workers.
35. Roediger, *Wages*, 10–13. In the case of Midwestern coal fields, Ronald L. Lewis argues that split labor market theory, in which indigenous *workers* (higher paid and predominantly white) blocked "outside" workers (lower paid and predominantly Black), holds more explanatory power than a traditional Marxist interpretation in which the profit maximization leads *owners* to systematically create division within the working class. He explains, "Operators in the northern coal fields would have employed *any* labor force that accepted the lower scale. In fact, there is little empirical evidence to support the contention that operators attempted to divide the working class by developing a privileged stratum of white miners." Lewis, *Black Coal Miners*, xiii.
36. Walter Johnson, *The Broken Heart of America: St. Louis and the Violent History of the United States* (New York: Basic Books, 2020), 263.
37. John H. Keiser contends that employers, even more than white workers, were responsible for spikes in anti-Black racism because they "deliberately attempted to increase and exploit racial tension and division by employing black strikebreakers." Keiser, "Black Strikebreakers," 326.
38. Alonzo M. Ward, "The Specter of Black Labor: African American Workers in Illinois Before the Great Migration, 1847 to 1910," PhD dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2017, 290.
39. Boswell, *Racial Competition*, 25–27, 42.
40. "Braidwood Monster," *Streator Times*, January 21, 1887.
41. Arnesen, "Black Strikebreaker," 322. Joe William Trotter Jr. argues similarly, in *River Jordan: African American Urban Life in the Ohio Valley* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 69–71. On Black strikebreaking as an expression of masculinity, see Stephen H. Norwood, *Strikebreaking and Intimidation: Mercenaries and Mas-*

culinity in Twentieth-Century America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 80–86.
42. Boswell, *Racial Competition*, 33–34.
43. Whatley, "African American Strikebreaking," 548.
44. "Peoria, Ill.," *John Swinton's Paper*, March 20, 1887.
45. Trotter, *River Jordan*, 71.
46. Deception was so common among Illinois coal companies that in 1899 the state legislature passed a law making it illegal for operators to import labor through false advertising. Keiser, "Black Strikebreakers," 37. The bill passed the house 112 to 4, but faced opposition from some African Americans, including Representative William L. Martin of Cook County.
47. Whatley, "African American Strikebreaking," 537–39.
48. Spero, *Black Worker*, 36–43.
49. Brian Kelly, "Sentinels for New South Industry: Booker T. Washington, Industrial Accommodation and Black Workers in the Jim Crow South," *Labor History* 44 (Fall 2003): 337–57.
50. Lewis R. Harlan, ed., *The Booker T. Washington Papers,* vol. 1: *The Autobiographical Writings* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), 160.
51. Peter Gottlieb, "Black Miners and the 1925–28 Bituminous Coal Strike: The Colored Committee of Non-Union Miners, Montour Mine No. 1, Pittsburgh Coal Company," *Labor History* 28 (Spring 1987): 232–41.
52. Philip S. Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker: 1619–1981* (New York: International Publishers, 1982), 79.
53. Ward, "Specter," 292; Lorenzo J. Greene and Carter G. Woodson, *The Negro Wage Earner* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1930), 132n27.
54. Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker*, 78.
55. Elliot M. Rudwick, *W. E. B. Du Bois: Propagandist of the Negro Protest* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960), 253; "Organized Labor," *The Crisis* 4 (July 1912): 131.
56. "The General Strike and Lawlessness," *The Messenger*, June 1922, 427.
57. Batzell, *Organizing Workers in the Shadow of Slavery*, 9.
58. See John Frymer and Jacob M. Grumbach, "Labor Unions and White Racial Politics," *American Journal of Political Science* 65 (January 2021): 225–40; and Jake Rosenfeld and Meredith Kleykamp, "Organized Labor and Racial Wage Inequality in the United States," *American Journal of Sociology* 117 (March 2021): 1460–1502. On how scarcity amplifies racism, see Cody R. Melcher, "Economic Insecurity and the Racial Attitudes of White Americans," *American Politics Research* 51 (January 2023): 342–56.
59. Lewis, *Black Coal Miners*, 79–81.
60. "Scabs Die in Little Egypt," *Daily Worker*, August 14, 1929.

Chapter 10: Two Worlds

1. Herbert R. Northrup, "The Negro and the United Mine Workers," *Southern Economic Journal* 9 (April 1943): 313–26.
2. Herbert G. Gutman, " "The Negro and the United Mine Workers of America," in *Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America* (New York: Vintage, 1977),

185–89. Gutman estimates that by 1900 roughly 24 percent of the UMW's bituminous miners were African American, and perhaps as many as half of all Black bituminous miners belonged to the union.

3. Michael Pierce, "The Gutman-Hill Debate Revisited: R. F. Warren and the National Executive Board of the United Mine Workers," *Labor History* 38 (Winter 1996–97): 76–79; Andrew Roy, *A History of the Coal Miners of the United States* (Columbus, OH: J. L. Traugher Printing Company, 1903), 254.
4. Philip S. Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker: 1619–1981* (New York: International Publishers, 1982), 169; *United Mine Workers Journal* to W. E. B. Du Bois, February 22, 1903, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst.
5. "The Mongolian," *United Mine Workers Journal* (*UMWJ*), January 14, 1892; "Nominations," *UMWJ*, December 31, 1891.
6. Michael Pierce, "The Populist President of the American Federation of Labor: The Career of John McBride, 1880–1895," *Labor History* 41 (2000): 5–24.
7. Joe W. Trotter Jr., "Black Miners in West Virginia: Class and Community Responses to Workplace Discrimination, 1920–1930," in John H. M. Laslett, ed., *The United Mine Workers of America: A Model of Industrial Solidarity?* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 269–96.
8. Ronald L. Lewis, *Black Coal Miners in America: Race, Class, and Community Conflict, 1780–1980* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1987), 145.
9. Herbert R. Northrup, "The Negro and the United Mine Workers," *Southern Economic Journal* 9 (April 1943): 160; Lewis, *Black Coal Miners*, 170.
10. Gutman, "The Negro and the United Mine Workers," 119–208.
11. Herbert Hill, "The Problem of Race in American Labor History," *Review in American History* 24 (June 1996): 196–97. Hill paints the *UMWJ* as enthusiastically white supremacist and its leadership "dogmatically racist." On Hill's mischaracterization of Gutman's position, see Eric Arnesen, "Up From Exclusion: Black and White Workers, Race, and the State of Labor History," *Reviews in American History* 26 (March 1998): 146–50.
12. Joe William Trotter, Jr., "The Dynamics of Race and Ethnicity in the U.S. Coal Industry," *International Review of Social History* 60 (2015): 147–48, 164.
13. Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 206.
14. "Classes," *UMWJ*, June 30, 1892; John McBride, "Producers vs. Non–Producers," *American Federationist* 2 (October 1895): 144.
15. "Traitors," *UMWJ*, August 11, 1892.
16. "Declines," *UMWJ*, December 31, 1891.
17. "Is Immigration Hurtful to the Country?," *UMWJ*, December 29, 1892.
18. When editors did broach the topic, as in the case of a lynching in Rich Hill, Missouri, in 1893, it was sometimes to defend coal miners from popular accounts that cast them as the principal antagonists. *UMWJ*, September 14, 1893.
19. "Color Question," *UMWJ*, March 10, 1892.
20. "Wendell Phillips's Advice to Workingmen," *UMWJ*, September 8, 1892; "Negro Domination," *UMWJ*, August 16, 1893.
21. Karin A. Shapiro, *A New South Rebellion: The Battle Against Convict Labor in the Tennessee Coal Fields, 1871–1896* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 115; and "Color Question," *UMWJ*, May 5, 1892. Black miner William

Camack denied "the difference between a negro who has seven-eighths of white blood and a white man who with one-eighth of negro blood."

22. On "organic intellectuals," see Antonio Gramsci, "The Intellectuals," in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 3–23.
23. *The Carpenter*, reprinted in *UMWJ*, December 6, 1894.
24. Gutman, "The Negro and the United Mine Workers," 162.
25. Robert J. Steinfeld, *Coercion, Contract, and Free Labor in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 13, 25. These "unfree" coercions included physical restraint, whippings, hard labor, and imprisonment. Despite proposing that coercion existed on a continuum and eschewing a binary between "free" wage labor and slavery, Steinfeld's definition overvalues legalism, legislation, and formal contract.
26. Keri Leigh Merritt, *Masterless Men: Poor Whites and Slavery in the Antebellum South* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 36.
27. On persistent forms of coercion in the post–Civil War "free" labor system, see Amy Dru Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Age of Slave Emancipation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and Gunther Peck, *Reinventing Free Labor: Padrones and Immigrant Workers in the American West, 1880–1930* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
28. Norman Ware, *The Industrial Worker, 1840–1860: The Reaction of American Industrial Society to the Advance of the Industrial Revolution* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1924), xv n1.
29. *UMWJ*, November 1, 1894, 8.
30. Debs explained that while owners that held workers in a type of "perpetual bondage" in which they were legally free to contract but, in practice, fully bound to oppressive employers and starvation wages, workers were not in fact "bought and sold" under wage slavery, nor were they "scourged to their daily tasks." See "The Problem of Labor," *Evansville Journal*, July 7, 1895.
31. See the example of Spring Valley, Illinois, where in July 1895 several hundred miners issued a press release offering themselves to the Spring Valley Coal Company as "voluntary slaves." "Worse Than Chattel Slavery," *The Wealth Makers of the World* (Lincoln, NE), August 1, 1895.
32. As Roediger argues, comparisons between wage workers and chattel slaves date to the Jacksonian era, and often had proslavery underpinnings, as "slavery" and Blackness were so synonymous that resistance to industrial "enslavement" became central to the formation of the "white worker." *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991), 65–94.
33. *Chicago Tribune*, "Wage Work Is Not 'Slavery,'" September 1, 1893. On Joseph Medill and "antilabor democracy," see Cedric de Leon, *The Origins of Right to Work: Antilabor Democracy in Nineteenth-Century Chicago* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 1.
34. Helga Kristin Hallgrimsdottir and Cecilia Benoit, "From Wage Slaves to Wage Workers: Cultural Opportunity Structures and the Evolution of the Wage Demands of the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor, 1880–1900," *Social Forces* 85 (March 2017): 1393.
35. Matthew E. Stanley, *Grand Army of Labor: Workers, Veterans, and the Meaning of the Civil War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2021), 70–76.

36. "White Slavery," *Chicago Tribune*, February 14, 1883.
37. "Slavery Just the Same," *UMWJ*, May 21, 1891.
38. "Indiana Miners [Official Report of the Federated Association of Miners and Mine Laborers of Indiana]," *National Labor Tribune* (*NLT*), February 8, 1890; "An Illinois Criticism," *NLT*, May 30, 1891.
39. "Deplorable," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, March 30, 1897.
40. "White Slaves in the Coal Regions," *Boonville Enquirer*, November 2, 1900; "Government by Injunction," *Daily Democrat*, September 25, 1896.
41. "The Socialists," *Chicago Inter Ocean*, August 13, 1883.
42. The *Journal* frequently decried "white slavery" in the North as worse than chattel slavery because owners had no incentive to house, feed, or clothe their laborers, and could discharge them at will. "Stop It—White Slavery," *UMWJ*, February 16, 1893.
43. "Song of the White Slave," *UMWJ*, July 13, 1899.
44. "Noble Sentiments," *UMWJ*, July 5, 1894.
45. "Good Healthy Advice from Wendell Phillips," *UMWJ*, September 14, 1893.
46. *UMWJ*, October 5, 1893.
47. "The Coal Baron's Song," *UMWJ*, September 14, 1893.
48. Frans H. Doppen, *Richard L. Davis and the Color Line in Ohio Coal: A Hocking Valley Mine Labor Organizer, 1862–1900* (McFarland & Co.: Jefferson, NC, 2016), 9.
49. "I Am Living in Rendville," *UMWJ*, March 15, 1894.
50. "Look Out for Number One," *UMWJ*, April 12, 1894.
51. "Immigration," *UMWJ*, December 29, 1892.
52. "Pauper Labor," *UMWJ*, October 6, 1892.
53. "National Annual Convention," *UMWJ*, April 13, 1893; "Slave Trade," *UMWJ*, August 25, 1892.
54. "America's Disgrace," *UMWJ*, November 17, 1892; "Convict Labor," *UMWJ*, April 30, 1891.
55. Douglas A. Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II* (New York: Doubleday, 2008); Karin A. Shapiro, *A New South Rebellion: The Battle Against Convict Labor in the Tennessee Coal Fields, 1871–1896* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).
56. "Convicts in Mines," *UMWJ*, September 17, 1891.
57. "Leasing Convicts," *UMWJ*, September 3, 1891.
58. "Indignation," *UMWJ*, November 19, 1891; "In Slave Land," *UMWJ*, June 22, 1893.
59. "P.H. Donnelly's Report," *NLT*, March 16, 1889.
60. "Appeal to Southern Illinois Miners," *NLT*, March 16, 1889.
61. "Competitive Coal Fields and National Organization," *UMWJ*, April 20, 1893.
62. Esarey, *Indiana*, 901.
63. "Opposed to Home Labor," *Evansville Courier*, October 18, 1894.
64. "District Eleven," *UMWJ*, April 13, 1893.
65. Stuart B. Kaufman, ed., *The Samuel Gompers Papers,* vol. 2: *The Early Years of the American Federation of Labor, 1887–1890* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 439; "Declines," *UMWJ*, December 31, 1891.
66. "Declines," *UMWJ*, December 31, 1891.
67. "Trades Unionism," *UMWJ*, May 28, 1891. On membership numbers, see "National Annual Convention," *UMWJ*, April 13, 1893.
68. "National Annual Convention, President McBride's Address," *UMWJ*, April 13, 1893.

69. "Newcastle, Ill.," *UMWJ*, December 28, 1893; "Sorehead," *UMWJ*, February 8, 1894.
70. "From Egypt," *UMWJ*, October 12, 1893.
71. Even so, paying membership—a few thousand strong—continued to fall short of target numbers. Dana M. Caldemeyer, *Union Renegades: Miners, Capitalism, and Organizing in the Gilded Age* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2021), 8, 14.
72. "District Eleven," *UMWJ*, September 1, 1892. Evansville's cooperative mine floundered, and was purchased by sawmill magnate Charles Schulte in 1893.
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76. *UMWJ*, June 15, 1893.
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79. "Captain," *UMWJ*, October 4, 1894.
80. "The Old, Old Story," *UMWJ*, August 16, 1894.
81. "Solon," *UMWJ*, August 9, 1894.
82. *New York Times*, May 25, 1894; "A New Organizer," *UMWJ*, March 22, 1894.
83. "District Eleven," *UMWJ*, May 3, 10, and 24, 1894.
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85. "To Workingmen," *UMWJ*, May 14, 1891.
86. "Old Glory," *UMWJ*, July 13, 1893.
87. "At Springfield," *UMWJ*, May 4, 1893. Rosemary Fuerer addresses Crawford's background in *Remember Virden! The Coal Mine Wars of 1898–1900* (Springfield, IL: Illinois Humanities Council, 1998), 15.
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90. "Capitalism," *UMWJ*, April 20, 1893.
91. "Forms of Socialism," *UMWJ*, June 25, 1891.
92. "A Little Talk," *UMWJ*, August 25, 1892.
93. For examples, see "Davis," *UMWJ*, August 4, 1892; "Davis Hot," *UMWJ*, January 14, 1892.
94. "Davis Appreciates," *UMWJ*, January 28, 1892; "Rendville, O.," *UMWJ*, April 21, 1892; "The Colored Race and Labor Organization," *UMWJ*, May 25, 1893. On the "progress of the race," see "Color Question," *UMWJ*, March 10, 1892.
95. "A Frank Letter," *UMWJ*, December 24, 1891; Doppen, *Davis*, 95.
96. "Brother Davis," *UMWJ*, December 3, 1891.
97. Arnesen, "Black Strikebreaker," 321–31.
98. "Davis Laments," *UMWJ*, March 31, 1892.
99. Doppen, *Davis*, 138; *UMWJ*, October 10, 1899
100. "New Emancipation," *UMWJ*, October 1, 1891.

101. Gutman, "The Negro and the United Mine Workers," 150; Arnesen, "Black Strikebreaker," 326–33.
102. "New Emancipation," *UMWJ*, October 1, 1891.
103. "Rendville," *UMWJ*, October 27, 1892.
104. "Rendville Miners," *UMWJ*, September 24, 1891.
105. "Land of Bondage," *UMWJ*, June 30, 1892.
106. Gutman, "The Negro and the United Mine Workers," 142.
107. "A Warning Voice," *UMWJ*, July 20, 1899. The author was probably E. A. Durden, who penned other articles for the *UMWJ*.
108. "Geo. F. Williams," *UMWJ*, June 1, 1899.
109. "Laurence Gardner," *UMWJ*, July 12, 1894.
110. "Island City, Ind.," *UMWJ*, May 5, 1892.
111. "Laurence's Letter," *UMWJ*, October 19, 1893.
112. "A Miner's Wife," *UMWJ*, October 22, 1891.
113. "Laurene," *UMWJ*, August 16, 1894.
114. "The Afro American as a Factor in the Labor Problem," *UMWJ*, December 28, 1893.
115. "Clark," *UMWJ*, August 9, 1894.
116. "Laurene," *UMWJ*, August 16, 1894.
117. "Negro Noses," *UMWJ*, January 18, 1894.
118. "The Afro-American as a Factor in the Labor Problem," *UMWJ*, December 28, 1893. See also Joy James, *Transcending the Talented Tenth: Black Leaders and American Intellectuals* (New York: Routledge, 1997).
119. Caldemeyer, *Union Renegades*, 93.
120. On Hands's endorsement of public ownership and free homesteads, see "Brazil News," *UMWJ*, January 26, 1893.
121. "Willing Hands," *UMWJ*, May 12, 1892; "Brazil Report," *UMWJ*, July 14, 1892.
122. "Brazil, Ind.," *UMWJ*, May 5, 1892.
123. "About Pittsburgh," *UMWJ*, June 2, 1892.
124. Caldemeyer, *Union Renegades*, 95–96.
125. "Brazil, Ind.," *UMWJ*, April 14, 1892; "Brazil Report," *UMWJ*, July 14, 1892.
126. "Brazil, Ind.," *UMWJ*, March 24, 1892.
127. "Brazil Items," *UMWJ*, July 28, 1892.
128. Daniel Letwin, "Interracial Unionism, Gender, and 'Social Equality' in the Alabama Coal Fields, 1878–1908," *Journal of Southern History* 61 (August 1995): 529.
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130. "Negro vs. Nigger," *UMWJ*, September 29, 1892.
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134. Roy, *Coal Miners*, 254.
135. *UMWJ*, September 29, 1892; *UMWJ*, May 4, 1893.
136. "Unionism," *UMWJ*, January 14, 1892.

137. "Sinthy Snodgrass," *UMWJ*, March 3, 1892.
138. "Our Colored Sister," *UMWJ*, July 2, 1891.
139. "Resolution," *UMWJ*, July 6, 1899.
140. Stephen Kantrowitz, *Ben Tillman and the Reconstruction of White Supremacy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 264.
141. "Kipling and Davis," *UMWJ*, March 30, 1899.
142. Gutman, "The Negro and the United Mine Workers," 187. Gutman estimates that in 1900 roughly 24 percent of all bituminous miners were Black, and that between 36 and 50 percent of those were unionized. See also Price V. Fishback, *Soft Coal, Hard Choices: The Economic Welfare of Bituminous Miners, 1890–1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 28–29, 94.
143. Gutman, "The Negro and the United Mine Workers," 192.
144. Sterling D. Spero and Abram L. Harris, *The Black Worker: The Negro and the Labor Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), 336–37.

Part VI: Race Wars

1. On the NMU and CP shift toward dual unionism, see Fraser M. Ottanelli, *The Communist Party of the United States: From the Depression to World War II* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 21–23.
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3. Theodore Draper, "Communists and Miners, 1928–1933," *Dissent* 19 (April 1972): 375. Boyce had been expelled from the UMW for his role in the "Save the Union" movement of the mid-1920s.
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6. "Negro Workers Should Join Workers Party," *Daily Worker*, September 22, 1928.
7. Mark Solomon, *The Cry Was Unity: Communists and African Americans, 1917–1936* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998), 104.
8. David R. Berman, *Socialist Mayors in the United States* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2022), 21.
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11. "Eve of the Illinois Mine Convention," *Daily Worker*, October 26, 1929.
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13. "Appeal to Negroes," *Daily Worker*, January 15, 1930.
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15. "Why Every Negro Miner Should Join the National Miners' Union," *Daily Worker*, January 21, 1929.
16. "Negro Vice Chairman," *Daily Worker*, September 2, 1929.
17. "The Trade Union Unity Convention and the Negro Masses," *Daily Worker*, August 27, 1929.
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Chapter 11: The Economics of Race War

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3. Emma Lou Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana Before 1900: A Study of a Minority* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Press, 1957), 226–27, 358.
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5. "Importing Negroes," *Indiana State Sentinel*, December 27, 1893; "Trouble Among Miners," *Maysville Evening Bulletin*, December 21, 1893. This report claims that Black union men were among the indignant miners.
6. "Don't Want Negro Miners," *Indianapolis Journal*, December 26, 1893; "An Eruption in Linton," *Indianapolis Journal*, December 27, 1893.
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13. "An Eruption in Linton," *Indianapolis Journal*, December 27, 1893; "Says Its Politics," *Indianapolis Journal*, December 27, 1893.
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17. D. S. Marsh to Claude Matthews, July 1, 1894, Folder 1, CMP, ISL.
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78. Rucker, *Race Riots*, 674–675.
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90. "A Victim," *UMWJ*, October 5, 1899. In a September 3 interview with the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, Brush maintained that his labor force consisted of 70 white and 125 Black non-union miners. This figure is indicative of how Black strikebreakers were commonplace, but also overrepresented in media accounts. See also Gutman, "The Negro and the United Mine Workers," 181–83.
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Chapter 12: Kingdom of Smoke

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14. Foner, *Black Worker*, 75–76.
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16. Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915–1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 90.
17. Schwartz, "Lynching of Robert Prager,," 420.
18. Margaret Gadsby, "The Coal Strikes," *Monthly Labor Review* 15 (November 1922): 2, 14.
19. John H. M. Laslett, *Colliers Across the Sea: A Comparative Study of Class Formation in Scotland and the American Midwest, 1830–1924* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 216.
20. Scott Doody, *Herrin Massacre* (Morrisville, NC: Lulu, 2013), 22.
21. "Grand Jury Indict 214 for Herrin Horror," *Coal Age*, September 28, 1922, 509.
22. Chatland Parker, *The Herrin Massacre: A Fair and Impartial Statement of All the Facts* (Chicago,: Parker Publishing, 1923) 21, 70, 75, 120.
23. *UMWJ*, July 1, 1922.
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25. National Coal Association, *The Herrin Conspiracy* (Washington, D.C: National Coal Association, 1922), 30, 36, Box 20, Folder 50, Southern Illinois Collection (SIC), Morris Library, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois.
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45. Frank H. Coy to Lennington Small, June 23, 1922, Box 279, Sub-Series 3, LSP; Lennington Small letter, June 28, 1922, Box 279, SubSeries 3, LSP.
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